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CLIFFORD EDMUND BOSWORTH

THE MEDIAEVAL ISLAMIC UNDERWORLD

The Rantū Sūfī to Arabic Society and Literature

PART ONE





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THE MEDIAEVAL
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THE MEDIAEVAL ISLAMIC UNDERWORLD

The Banū Sāsān in Arabic Society and Literature

BY

CLIFFORD EDMUND BOSWORTH

PART ONE

THE BANŪ SĀSĀN
IN ARABIC LIFE AND LORE



LEIDEN
E. J. BRILL
1976

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The present work represents the fruits of almost a decade's intermittent work on the general question of the Islamic underworld. When I first began this research, with Abū Dulaf's *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya* as my starting-point, it seemed to me that the whole topic was very little explored, and the ensuing years have done little to change that impression. The sole work known to me specifically touching on certain aspects of the mediaeval Islamic underworld is Dr Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Munajjid's brief monograph *az-Zurafā' wa-sh-shahḥādhūn fī Baghdād wa-Bārīs* (Beirut 1969), in which the author compares the early Islamic information in Jāḥiẓ and Abū Dulaf with that from the mediaeval France of figures like Villon (I take this opportunity of thanking Dr al-Munajjid for his kindness in bringing this book to my notice and for presenting me with a copy), although Professor Franz Rosenthal's fascinating book *The Herb, hashish versus medieval Muslim society* (Leiden 1971) deals with the class of drug addicts and narcotics peddlers who were at least on the margins if not actually part of the underworld. Hence the present work is very much a pioneering study, and my hope is that this scratching of the surface will stimulate other scholars — those who are specialists in the various languages and civilisations which contributed to the cultural stock of the Islamic world — into investigating other aspects of the Islamic underworld and perhaps to bring the study down to the present day.

I have been fortunate in being able to call upon the expertise and knowledge of various Manchester colleagues for advice on certain points, notably of Professor James Barr, Dr J.D. Latham, Mr M.E.J. Richardson and Mr Stefan Strelcyn, whilst Professor Emrys Peters read through Chapters I-VI and made several pertinent observations from the standpoint of a Middle East anthropologist. I gratefully acknowledge too the assistance of Professor D.N. MacKenzie on Iranian linguistic topics, of Professor C.J.F. Dowsett on Armenian and gypsy ones, and of the late Sir Gerard Clauson on Turkish ones. Of especial value was the fact that on various visits to Beirut I was able to discuss at length difficult points of textual reconstruction and interpretation with my old friend Professor Iḥsān 'Abbās of the American University of Beirut, whilst my former students Dr Aḥmad Shauqī Raḍwān and Dr Ṣubḥī 'Abd al-Mun'im Sa'id were

also of great help here. Mr Ḥasan Bakr of the Netherlands World Broadcasting Service made some useful comments on the Arabic texts. The Arabic jargon texts in Part Two have been expertly written out in calligraphy by my student Dr Munira ar-Rashid and I am especially grateful to her for the resulting elegance of the pages in question. To all of these I owe a debt of gratitude, yet of course the responsibility for the work as a whole remains entirely my own. Last but not least, I have to thank Mr F.C. Wieders Jr. and Messrs E.J. Brill for undertaking in these troubled times, in which it seems that, culturally at least, the world is entering upon a new Dark Ages, the publication of this complex work and for producing such an attractive piece of typography and book production.

The complete book actually appears in two parts. Part One, *The Banū Sāsān in Arabic life and lore*, comprises Chapters I-VI and deals with the social history of these rogues and beggars and with a general consideration of their jargons. Part Two, *The Arabic jargon texts: the Qaṣīda sāsāniyyas of Abū Dulaf and Ṣafī d-Dīn*, comprises Chapters VII-VIII and the Arabic texts and facsimiles. Part One is provided with conventional indices of proper names and of technical terms, etc., so that this Part One may be used as a volume complete in itself. Part Two contains a glossary of jargon words and other unusual words occurring in the two poems, by means of which words appearing in the poems and discussed in the historical and linguistic notes for each poem may be tracked down.

October 1975

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INTRODUCTION

The overwhelming mass of Arabic literature which has come down to us (apart from such folk-tales as those in the Arabian Nights and the cycles of popular romances) is set in a classical mould, the product of authors writing in urban centres and at courts for their patrons, sc. for rulers, governors, high officials, etc. The popular milieu is little known, despite the fact that there appears in Arabic literature from the 3rd/9th century onwards a certain interest in low life (one which remains, however, a very subordinate strand in Islamic literature, in many periods hardly visible at all).

Yet there are indications that a teeming underworld existed at the lower end of pre-modern Islamic society, not only within the crowded warrens of the towns, but out in the countryside and villages also, in the shape of itinerant bands of rogues and beggars who roamed there and who could boast, as does our poet Abū Dulaf, that "The whole world is ours, and whatever is in it, the lands of Islam and of unbelief alike". The underworld classes of which we have information include the fully criminal ones, like skilful thieves and burglars, footpads and brigands, and also those in the no-man's land between criminality and conventional behaviour, like entertainers and mountebanks of diverse types, beggars of differing degrees of ingenuity, quack doctors, dentists and herbalists, and so forth. Above all, there was a rich array of tricksters who used the Islamic religion as a cloak for their predatory ways, well aware that the purse-strings of the faithful could be easily loosed by the eloquence of the man who claimed to be an ascetic or mystic, to be a worker of miracles and wonders, to be selling relics of the Muslim martyrs and holy men, or to have undergone a spectacular conversion from the purblindness of Christianity or Judaism to the clear light of the faith of Muḥammad. These practitioners of downright roguery were only a level or two below the widespread class of popular preachers and religious storytellers, who were influential amongst the common people and who brought to the masses a much more comprehensible and palatable version of the faith than the systematised and legalistic doctrines preached by the representatives of the official religious institution. They thus fulfilled a useful educative rôle in society, yet were easily tempted to play upon the credulousness of the masses and to exploit

them for financial gain or for the achievement of prestige and influence. It seems likely that the activities of all these various types making up the general collectivity of the Banū Sāsān, "Sons of Sāsān", as they are dubbed in the sources (and as all these beggars and rogues apparently called themselves), overlapped the similar activities of such a group as the gypsies of the Middle East, although these last were a distinctly separate element of society which is only occasionally touched upon in this book.

Largely because of the restricted nature of the source-material available, the area upon which this study concentrates is that of the Islamic heartlands from Egypt to Iran, lands which were either largely Arabic-speaking or where there was a widespread use of Arabic as a cultural and intellectual medium. Of course, the stratagems and tricks of the beggars and rogues here discussed are not peculiar to mediaeval Islamic society. They can be paralleled in a great many societies and ages, at least in the pre-modern period, and the obvious parallels in the literature on beggars and swindlers in Western Europe of the later Middle Ages and after, such as the literatures of France, Elizabethan England and Germany, are cited for comparative purposes. But the field of comparison could be widened almost indefinitely, and could be traced right up to our own times. With regard to the Arab world, it has been interesting to hear from Arab students and scholars, with whom some of this material has been discussed at times, how many of the practices of the Banū Sāsān have been personally witnessed by themselves in their homelands, above all, in the less westernised rural areas. And of course, the contemporary Arab novel and short story provides further evidence that the Banū Sāsān are by no means completely extinct even now; a figure like Zaiṭa, the deformer of beggar's limbs, in Naḡīb Maḥfūz's novel *Zuqāq al-Midaqq* is in direct descent from Jāḥiẓ's *Musha'ib* of eleven hundred years before.

The Arabic source material utilised in this book, and especially in the historical survey which forms Part One, *The Banū Sāsān in Arabic life and lore*, is derived in part from the exiguous prose texts dealing with these groups and with other folk who existed off their wits and on the margins of society: these include certain works of the well-known author Jāḥiẓ of Baṣra, the *maqāmāt* of Badī' az-Zamān al-Hamadḥānī and of Ḥarīrī, the collections of anecdotes, often scabrous, in *adab* works like ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī's *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*, the shadow plays of Ibn Dāniyāl, and above all, the *Kashf al-asrār* "Unveiling of

secrets" of the Syrian writer Jaubarī, a work expressly aimed at putting the unwary on their guard against the wiles and swindles of the Banū Sāsān. However, a study of any extensiveness or depth would not have been possible without the existence of two long poems written in the Arabic jargon, the *munāghāt*, of the Banū Sāsān, hence called *Qaṣīda sāsāniyyas* "Poems in the Sāsānī jargon", or "poems on the activities of the Banū Sāsān". Like other esoteric bands, or groups outside the pale of normal society, the Banū Sāsān evolved their own jargon or argot as a means of private communication and as a means of excluding from their activities inquisitive members of the *akhsān*, the outsiders and non-beggars. No doubt there were several such jargons used in different parts of the Islamic world, perhaps in some cases based on local languages like Berber in North Africa, Coptic in Egypt, Persian in Iran, etc. The jargons of the two *Qaṣīda sāsāniyyas* are basically Arabic ones, and the rich lexical stock of the classical Arabic language must have provided the bases for these forms of communication, though there is a perceptible admixture of loan-words from outside languages, and the possibility of sheer invention should not be overlooked.

The first of the *Qaṣīda sāsāniyyas*, that of the traveller and physician Abū Dulaf al-Khazrajī, was composed in the second half of the 4th/10th century and probably emanates from the region of western Iran, at that time ruled by the Dailamī Būyid dynasty; the stimulus for Abū Dulaf's composing the poem was the interest taken in the language and ways of the beggars by the great Būyid Vizier, the Šāhib Ibn 'Abbād. The second *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya* was written by the poet Šafī d-Dīn al-Ḥillī in the first half of the 8th/14th century, probably in Iraq or at the court of one of the Turkmen amīrs of the Artuqid dynasty in Diyārbakr. The two poems were published in wholly uncritical oriental editions at the end of the 19th century, and subsequent editions down to the present time have essentially reproduced these texts. In fact, these printed editions contain innumerable mis-readings and unclear passages; that of Šafī d-Dīn's poem, in particular, is almost totally unintelligible as it stands. It is not surprising that very few previous scholars have made much use of Abū Dulaf's poem, and none at all — so far as I know — of Šafī d-Dīn's one.

Adequate texts are thus a supreme desideratum here. Consequently, in Part Two, *The Arabic jargon texts: the Qaṣīda sāsāniyyas of Abū Dulaf and Šafī d-Dīn*, the two poetic texts are now edited critically, each from several manuscripts, the *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya* of Abū Dulaf

being illuminated by the commentary extant in all the manuscripts examined, and that of Ṣafī d-Dīn by the interlinear glosses to be found in three of the manuscripts consulted. Translations of the poems (and in the case of Abū Dulaf's poem, of the commentary also) are supplied, together with extensive linguistic and historical notes, without which the bare texts and translations would be of limited value and comprehensibility. The glossary of jargon and other unusual words contains some 540 lexical items culled from the two poems and their respective commentary and glosses. Hardly any of these appear in the standard dictionaries, and it is hoped that this list alone, when combined with the elucidations of the notes, will form a substantial contribution to Arabic lexicography in a semantic sphere until now under-represented. The glossary may, indeed, be described as a step towards the preparation of a *Dictionary of slang and unconventional Arabic*, some of the groundwork for a future Arabist Eric Partridge.

Nevertheless, a sense of inadequacy in the elucidation of this material has been felt, and this is inevitable. The commentary and glosses miss out certain words requiring definition and explain others unsatisfactorily. It is rare that any parallel texts exist for throwing light here, and context is usually an imprecise guide in a sphere where exact definition of some trick or practice of the beggars is required. I have endeavoured, where possible, to suggest origins and etymologies for as many of the jargon terms as possible, whether from classical Arabic and the dialects (though little is known of the evolution of the dialects at the critical periods here), or from outside languages of the Middle East, such as Hebrew, Greek, Syriac and Persian, which much influenced that stage of post-classical Arabic which scholars like Fück and Blau have taught us to call "Middle Arabic". Yet in many cases, the lines of enquiry peter out, and an unsolved — perhaps insoluble — problem remains.

Hence in the linguistic parts of the book, I have conceived my task as being that of a pioneer investigator, uncovering the topsoil, as it were, of Arabic jargon material, so that a subsequent generation of specialists, such as those in languages like mediaeval Hebrew, Syriac, Byzantine Greek, Middle Persian, etc., may delve more deeply. It seems very probable that such specialists will throw light on certain terms and practices which are to me, at this stage, obscure or incomprehensible; doubtless some of my own conjectures will be demonstrated to have been wrong. Most of all, I believe that an exhaustive approach from the Arabic dialects of the central Islamic lands, from

Egypt to Iraq, will prove fruitful; it is obvious that much jargon material starts as a deformation of the existing spoken language. However, at all points it will be well for the investigator to bear in mind the percipient warning of Enno Littmann, given at p. 177 below: that all examinations of Middle Eastern jargons stand on an extraordinarily shifting, uncertain ground, where surmise and conjecture are often the only ways to proceed, yet where such hypothesising can rarely be checked and subjected to watertight verification. Hence I myself have, I fear, used such words and phrases as "possibly", "probably", "it may be", "it could be", far more than I would normally like; in our present stage of defective knowledge, this is a necessary, if regrettable, caveat to many linguistic statements.

ABBREVIATIONS

BGA	<i>Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum</i> (Leiden)
BSL	<i>Bulletin de la Société Linguistique de Paris</i> (Paris)
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i> (London)
EI ¹	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islām</i> , first edition (Leiden)
EI ²	<i>Do.</i> , new edition (Leiden)
GAL	C. Brockelmann, <i>Geschichte der Arabischen Literatur</i> (Leiden)
GAS	Fuat Sezgin, <i>Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums</i> (Leiden)
GMS	Gibb Memorial Series (Leiden-London)
İA	<i>İslām Ansiklopedisi</i> (Istanbul)
IC	<i>Islamic Culture</i> (Hyderabad)
JAL	<i>Journal of Arabic Literature</i> (Leiden)
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i> (New Haven, Conn.)
JASB	<i>Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal</i> (Calcutta)
JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i> (Leiden)
JRAS	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i> (London)
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i> (Manchester)
LA	Muḥammad b. Mukarram, called Ibn Manẓūr, <i>Lisān al-ʿarab</i> , first edition (Būlāq 1300-8/1883-91)
MSOS	<i>Mitteilungen des Seminars für Orientalische Sprachen</i> , Westasiatische Abteilung (Berlin)
QS	<i>Qaṣida sāṣāniyya</i>
RA	<i>Revue Africaine</i> (Algiers)
REI	<i>Revue des Études Islamiques</i> (Paris)
RIMA	<i>Revue de l'Institut des Manuscrits Arabes</i> (Cairo)
RSO	<i>Rivista degli Studi Orientali</i> (Rome)
SBBAW	<i>Sitzungsberichte der Bayrischen Akademie der Wissenschaften</i> , Phil.-Hist. Kl. (Munich)
SBPMSE	<i>Sitzungsberichte der Physikalisch-medizinischen Sozietät in Erlangen</i> (Erlangen)
SBWAW	<i>Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften</i> , Phil.-Hist. Kl. (Vienna)
SI	<i>Studia Islamica</i> (Paris)
TA	as-Sayyid Murtaḍā az-Zabidī, <i>Tāj al-ʿarūs</i> , first edition (Būlāq 1306-7/1889-90)
TP	<i>T'oung-Pao</i> (Leiden)
TPS	<i>Transactions of the Philological Society</i> (London)
WZKM	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i> (Vienna)
ZA	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i> (Leipzig, Weimar, Strassburg, Berlin)
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i> (Leipzig, Berlin)
ZS	<i>Zeitschrift für Semitistik</i> (Leipzig)

In citations from the Qurʾān, where two different numbers are given for a verse, the first is that of Flügel's text and the second that of the official Egyptian edition.

CHAPTER ONE

VAGABONDS AND BEGGARS IN EARLY ISLAM

I

Begging has as good a claim as prostitution to be considered as the oldest profession. At an early stage in the evolution of human society, a gap between rich and poor has appeared, but this has in some degree been tempered by charity and by an emerging emphasis on giving for ethical and religious reasons. Hence the virtues of almsgiving have been stressed in all the higher religions. From many relevant passages in the Old Testament, one may cite among the oldest Proverbs x. 2, "Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death", and Proverbs xi. 4, "Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death" (RSV). In both these places, "righteousness" is in the Hebrew *šēdāqāh*, and in the Greek of the Septuagint *ἐλεημοσύνη*, originally "justice, righteousness", both of which words later acquired the technical meaning of "alms". The Hebrew word and its later meaning influenced Syriac and Ethiopic usage, and Hebrew-Aramaic usage gave to the Arabic of the Prophet's Medinan period the word *ṣadaqa*, pl. *ṣadaqāt* "alms, gifts to the poor", from which developed the denominative verb *taṣaddaqa* "to give alms".¹ Muslim exegetes derived the noun *ṣadaqa* from the verb *ṣadaqa* "to be sincere, veracious", and said that alms are so-called because they demonstrate the sincerity of one's faith.² In the Qur'ān, almsgiving is enjoined *inter alia* as a tribute to God in return for the bounty of the earth which He has bestowed on His creatures: "O believers, expend of the good things you have earned, and of that We have produced for you from the earth ..." (ii. 269/267); "And whatever good

¹ This verb eventually passed into the meaning of "to beg for alms", as clearly in Tabari, *Ta'rikh ar-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, ed. M.J. de Goeje *et alii* (Leiden 1879-1091), I, 515, even though some native lexicographical authorities regarded the equating of *taṣaddaqa* with *sa'ala* as vicious and vulgar, cf. Lane, *An Arabic-English lexicon*, s.v.

² See on this last point, A. Jeffery, *The foreign vocabulary of the Qur'añ* (Baroda 1938), 194, and EI¹ art. "Ṣadaqa" (T.H. Weir); and for a classic examination of the whole concept in the Semitic languages, F. Rosenthal, "Sedaka, charity", *The Hebrew Union College Annual*, XXIII (1950-1), 411-30.

you expend, surely God has knowledge of it. Those who expend their wealth night and day, secretly and in public, their wage awaits them with their Lord ..." (ii. 274-5/273-4); and "Believe in God and His Messenger, and expend of that unto which He has made you successors" (lvii. 7).³

It is clear that in the earliest period of Islam, up till the middle Medinan years of Muḥammad's mission, almsgiving was enjoined not as a social relief measure, but because a materialistic pre-occupation with riches is a hindrance to true piety. Only later in the Medinan period does voluntary almsgiving, *ṣadaqa*, become a formal tax, usually under the alternative designation of *zakāt*, a word which in the preceding Meccan period had denoted the idea of moral excellence or purity of heart rather than almsgiving specifically.⁴ The classes of potential recipients are now laid down (ii. 211/215), and the Ḥadīth later specifies the percentage contributions leviable on various types of income and property.⁵ Hence the stress laid by modern Muslim apologists on the *zakāt* as primarily an instrument for securing social justice and a more equitable redistribution of wealth is not so much the watchword of the golden age of the Patriarchal Caliphs as the secondary development of an original institution of almsgiving for the subjective good of the donor's soul. The Ḥadīth literature does in fact stress this latter motivation, so that Christ's dictum that "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35) appears in Bukhārī and Muslim as "The upper hand is better than the lower hand; the upper hand provides sustenance, the lower one merely demands".⁶ But side-by-side with this, the Ḥadīth trenchantly denounces the pertinacious and sturdy beggar who is well able to work but prefers a life of indolence (see further on this below, pp. 12-13).

In certain societies, begging for religious reasons has been erected into a major principle of life, above all in Hinduism and Buddhism. From Vedic times onwards, there had in India been Brahmans who renounced the world and all possessions and lived as itinerant beggars.

³ The translations here are those of A.J. Arberry, *The Koran interpreted* (London 1955). The Qur'ānic passages concerned with alms and almsgiving are detailed in such reference books as T.P. Hughes, *A dictionary of Islam* (London 1885), 14, 554, 699-700, and H.U.W. Stanton, *The teaching of the Qur'ān* (London 1919), 76.

⁴ W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca* (Oxford 1953), 165-9.

⁵ See R. Roberts, *The social laws of the Qorān* (London 1925), 70-8.

⁶ Bukhārī, *Kitāb az-Zakāt*, ch. XVIII; Muslim, *K. az-Zakāt*, ch. "The upper hand is better than the lower hand".

As Hinduism evolved, the doctrine of the four "stages of life" (*āśramas*) developed, and the fourth and final stage of the Brahman's self-enlightenment was that of the *bhikṣu* "beggar" or *yati* "ascetic" or *saṃnyāsin* "renouncer of the world", who had no fixed abode, but in the drier season at least of the Indian year went forth begging for his sustenance; the laws of Manu and other texts enumerate various subdivisions of these beggars.⁷ In Buddhism, the fully-ordained monks following Buddha's way call themselves "the community of mendicants" (*bhikkusangha*) and follow the same path as the Hindu *saṃnyāsin*.⁸ Even today, religious mendicancy remains remarkably flourishing in a strongly Buddhist society like that of Ceylon; the monk who goes round begging is regarded as so holy that people put their names down on a roster for the privilege of feeding him.⁹ In Indian society there appeared special castes of beggars, as of thugs and other types of criminal; hence orders of beggars arose in India, more highly organised than any of the dervish orders in Islam or the mediaeval Christian mendicant orders of friars.¹⁰

As well as this begging from religious motives, there has been begging for genuine reasons of indigence all the world over, and in mediaeval Islam as in mediaeval Europe, there were the poor scholars who begged to support themselves whilst tramping round in the pursuit of knowledge, *fī ṭalab al-ʿilm*, and who were tolerated and even respected members of society. The *yešibā bāḥūr* (this being the form of Yiddish syntax), the young man studying at a rabbinical college, was a familiar figure in the Jewish town and village communities of eastern Europe until the second World War; he had regular invitations from specific houses to eat there on fixed days of the week. Even today, mendicant students at the traditional schools of the Ethiopic Church live communally and support themselves by begging in villages which have been

⁷ L. Renou and J. Filliozat, *L'Inde classique, manuel des études indiennes* (Paris 1947), I, 602-3.

⁸ See H. Oldenberg, *Buddha, sein Leben, seine Lehre, seine Gemeinde*, 5th edn. (Stuttgart and Berlin 1906), 410 ff.

⁹ R.F. Gombrich, *Precept and practice, traditional Buddhism in the rural highlands of Ceylon* (Oxford 1971), 278.

¹⁰ Cf. the various articles on these topics in Edward Balfour's *The cyclopaedia of India and of Eastern and Southern Asia, commercial, industrial and scientific*, 3rd edn. (London 1885), I, 78-9 "Alms", II, 926-7 "Mendicants", III, 529-30 "Sanyasi", 1020 "Viragi".

specifically allocated to them.¹¹ However, the transition from these justifiable forms of begging to vagabondage and scrounging as a substitute for steady work and the responsibilities of a settled existence is an almost imperceptible process, and it is during this transitional phase that organisations of beggars begin to appear in both mediaeval Christendom and Islam.

II

Begging is apparently one of the most individualist of vocations, and the beggar often glories in his completely unfettered existence, beholden as he is to no man :

Praise be to God that I have no money, and owe favours to no man ;

The caravanserai is my home, my clothes-stand is my own body (i.e. I have only the clothes I stand up in), and my treasurer and steward is the greengrocer (i.e. from whom I can cadge scraps of food).¹²

Yet all through history, beggars have tended to coalesce into groups of kindred spirits, organised against the outside world, and often possessing their own jargons or other extra-linguistic means of secret communication, such as the tramps' marks in the Britain of up to a generation or so ago. Across western Asia and Europe, beggars and vagabonds have often been lumped together by the uninformed with the gypsies (who with their own distinctive Romany tongue and social cohesiveness have been well-fitted for retaining their ethnic identity and homogeneity) as a common social problem, although the separateness of the gypsies, not only on racial grounds but on those of function in society, is fairly clear in the Islamic world at least. Thus in the eastern Persian provinces of Khurasan and Qūhistān, and in Baluchistan, during the opening decades of this century, gypsies fulfilled useful functions in both rural and urban society as smiths, tinkers and carpenters, living either nomadically as independent groups or as dependents of tribesmen, or else permanently fixed in special quarters of certain towns.¹³ It would however be difficult to discern any vital social func-

¹¹ See Alaka Imbakom Kalewold, *Traditional Ethiopian church education* (New York 1970), 14, 16, 26.

¹² Tha'ālibī, *Kitāb at-Tamthīl wa-l-muḥāḍara*, ed. 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Muḥ. al-Ḥilū (Cairo 1381/1961), citing verses attributed to the Class of "Beggars, vagabonds and those who take anything to hand".

¹³ W. Ivanow, "On the language of the gypsies of Qainat (in Eastern Persia)", *JASB*,

tion for the beggars proper of mediaeval Islam; their existence was, so far as we can tell, a purely parasitic one in the body politic, unless one regards the availability of the vagabond's life as a certain safety-valve in society for its more restless spirits.

In Christian Europe, begging had already become something of a social problem in the later Middle Ages. The incidence of begging always increases at times of social disintegration and rapid change, when the disparity between rich and poor is thrown into sharper relief. Hence cataclysms such as the Black Death of the 14th century, and movements which were spread over a longer period but which had an equally dissolving effect on the existing social order such as the wars of religion, the decline of organised ecclesiastical charity, the beginnings of agrarian and industrial revolution, involving the enclosure and consolidation of agricultural land, all played their parts in aggravating the problem.

Sixteenth-century Europe was particularly exercised by these questions, and a considerable literature grew up on the beggars and their ways. When one starts from the basic premise that there is virtually no extreme of discomfort, and even of self-mutilation and self-torture, to which some members of mankind will not go rather than put in an honest day's work, one is not surprised to find a convergence of attitudes and practices amongst the beggars of both Christendom and Islam. A further common feature is the emergence of special jargons amongst beggars and rogues, as will be shown below. There was quite a considerable public interest in 16th century Europe and in the Islamic world from the 3rd/9th century onwards in the methods of these tricksters and in their private languages. The emergence of such an interest in low life and the underworld amongst mediaeval Muslims will be examined at length later. The continued existence of this interest in the devices and stratagems of beggars, charlatans and mountebanks is well demonstrated by the popularity — almost down to our own day and the present rapid disintegration of traditional Middle Eastern society, in which these types seem doomed to disappear — of works like Jaubari's *Kashf al-asrār* (for a detailed analysis of which see below, pp. 106-18).

The literature on beggars and swindlers becomes significant in France from the 15th century, and in England and Germany from the 16th

N.S. X (1914), 439-55, and *idem*, "Further notes on gypsies in Persia", *JASB*, N.S. XVI (1920), 218-91.

century onwards. This literature was composed not merely for its curiosity and entertainment value, but also with the practical aims of warning the gullible and unwary against the wiles of these predatory groups and of rousing society against the menace of what seemed like organised mendicancy and its attendant crime. In all three countries, the period was one of political, religious and social upheaval. In France, the Hundred Years' War left a much shaken-up, disorganised country over which the Valois kings were only gradually able to extend the authority of Paris; then, in the second half of the 16th century, came a new divisive factor in the shape of the Wars of Religion between Catholics and Huguenots. In Germany, the Reformation added religious disunity to the existing political fragmentation. The abuses of serfdom caused peasant jacqueries and a Peasants' War, and millenarian currents in religion stimulated sectarian outbreaks such as those in Anabaptist Münster. The result was distress in towns and countryside alike, with a flood of mercenary soldiers and landless peasants causing strains within the social system.

With the last phases of the Hundred Years' War in France and England's final loss of Aquitaine, bands of unemployed soldiers took to the roads and terrorised local populations with their violence and brigandage. It is not surprising that Burgundy, the epicentre of the Anglo-French-Burgundian conflict, was the homeland of these bands and, it seems, a formative region for the emergence of jargons of rogues, beggars and malefactors. It was for many years infested by the Coquillards, an ethnically mixed group with many Provençal, Spanish and Lombard elements within their ranks as well as the northern French. The Coquillards formed a kind of corporation of rogues, with their own officers and a *Roy de la Coquille*. The uprooting and trial of the greater part of the band took place at Dijon in 1455, and one product of the legal proceedings was the compiling of a vocabulary of their jargon, described as their *langage exquis* "secret language", from the evidence of one of the band, the barber Perrenet le Fournier. This jargon of the 15th century was known as *jobelin*, the language of the Jobs, simpletons and wise fools, who pretended to this affliction in order to fool people and excite their sympathy and money; the word *dupe*, incidentally (< *huppe* "hoopoe", Latin *upupa*, i.e. someone suitable for plucking or fleecing, cf. the modern French argot word *pigeon* and American slang "stool-pigeon"), already appears in French at Rouen in 1426, denoting the victim of the beggars' wiles, and must have passed across the Channel to England subsequently. It is also of

interest to note that the poet Villon — whose poetry and way of life inevitably recall those of al-Aḥnaf al-‘Ukbari and Abū Dulaf al-Khazrajī five centuries before¹⁴ — had many links with the Coquillards, and utilised their names, their argot and their exploits in his own *Recueil des ballades argotiques*, published with his other works in 1489.¹⁵

The existence of bands for organised begging and crime is equally attested for 16th century France, seen in the appearance of books on them and their jargons, such as *La vie généreuse des Mercelotz, Gueuz et Boesmiens, contenant leur façon de vivre, subtilitez et Gergon* of the pseudonymous Pechon de Ruby (Lyons 1596), and one of the *Séries* of the magistrate of Poitiers Guillaume Bouchet devoted to the rogues and beggars and their jargon (1598). With the *Jargon de l'argot réformé* of Olivier Chereau (Tours 1628) we have a work comparable in its popularity in France with that of the Elizabethan Thomas Harman in England (see on this below); it was still being reprinted, with large accretions of jargon from later times, as late as the mid-19th century. The original *Jargon de l'argot réformé* contained a vocabulary of 216 words and a description of the organisation of the beggars' corporations under their *Grand Coësre* and his lieutenants, the *Cagoux*. The title *Grand Coësre* is extremely interesting for our study, for it will be noted later (below, pp. 22-3) that high-sounding, royal titles have frequently been adopted by beggar leaders in the Middle East and in Europe alike. It is suggested that *Coësre* is from the Persian imperial title *Khusrau*, Byzantine Greek form *Χοσρόης*, often westernised as Chosroes.¹⁶ The fact that these bands of rogues and beggars continued to draw many of their members from the ranks of discharged and unemployed soldiers is seen in the usage in the opening years of the 17th century (actually attested as early as 1540) of the term *narquois* for the rogues' jargon; this word comes from *arquin*, with

¹⁴ This linkage was already made by A. Mez in his classic work on the civilisation of the Islamic world in the 4th/10th century, *Die Renaissance des Islāms* (Heidelberg 1922), 257, Eng. tr. Khuda Bukhsh, *The renaissance of Islam* (Patna 1937), 267.

¹⁵ A. Dauzat, *Les argots : caractères, évolution, influence*, Bibliothèque des chercheurs et des curieux (Paris 1929), 10, 17, 32-4; P. Guiraud, *L'argot*, Collection Que sais-je? (Paris), 11, 26.

¹⁶ French lexicographers do not seem to have any theories on the etymology of *Coësre*; at least, none is given in such standard works of reference as Larousse, *Grand dictionnaire universel*, and E. Huguet, *Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle* (Paris 1925-67), s.vv.

agglutination of the indefinite article *narquin*, "wandering soldier, mercenary", originally "archer", and has passed into modern French as the adjective "sly, cunning".¹⁷

The activities of organised bands of predatory beggars and brigands continued until a particularly late date in France. In the last decade of the 18th century, the "chauffeurs d'Orgères" terrorised the district around Orleans, the department of Loiret, tying up their victims and lighting fires under their feet to make them disgorge their money. Their trial in 1800 under the Consulate of Napoleon showed the existence amongst them of a corporate organisation on the lines of earlier underworld bands, with an elected head and apprentice "chauffeurs" aged between eight and fifteen years, and also of a particular jargon used by them.¹⁸

Amongst the extensive literature in German on beggars and tricksters is the *Liber vagatorum*, of uncertain authorship but probably composed ca. 1509 in south-western Germany or the Rhineland in High German. It was immediately popular, as the instantaneous appearance of Low German and Lower Rhenish German versions shows, and in 1528 Martin Luther wrote the preface for a further recension which was printed at Wittenberg. This little book contains three sections: the first on the various orders of vagabonds, the second containing diverse notabilia about them, and the third comprising a "Rotwelsch vocabulary", a glossary of the beggars' slang.¹⁹

The classes of beggar described in the book include many familiar types, such as the Lossner, the captive who claims to have escaped from infidel prisons, the galleys, etc., and who bears with him a forged letter from some distant potentate or town attesting to the genuineness of his pleas;²⁰ the Debisser or Dopser, who begs on religious pretexts such as fund-raising for repairing or building a church; the Grantner

¹⁷ Dauzat, *op. cit.*, 11-12, 35; Guiraud, *op. cit.*, 11-12, 26-7.

¹⁸ *Idem.*, in *Encyclopaedia universalis* (Paris 1968-), II, 366, art. "Argot".

¹⁹ The *Liber vagatorum* can be read, in both the High German and the Low German versions, in F. Kluge, *Rotwelsch. Quellen und Wortschatz der Gaunersprache und des verwandten Geheimsprachen. I. Rotwelsches Quellenbuch* (Strassburg 1901), 35-78. Kluge's book includes extracts from works on thieves' and beggars' cants ranging from the 13th century down to the slang of Viennese prostitutes of 1899. (I am grateful to Dr F. Taylor of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester for his kindness in procuring me a copy of this book.) An English translation was produced by J.C. Hotten, *The book of vagabonds and beggars, with a vocabulary of their language. Edited by Martin Luther in the year 1528* (London 1860).

or feigned epileptic, who chews soap to make himself foam at the mouth and pricks his nostrils to make them bleed; the Vopper or sham madman; the Über Sonzen ganger, an ostensibly distressed gentleman, who wears neat and clean clothes, who claims to have lost everything in war or by fire, etc., and who, like the Lossner, bears false letters of credence; the Seffer and the Schweiger, who feign illnesses, the latter trickster smearing his arms, hands and legs with a mixture of horse dung and water to simulate "the yellow sickness" (? jaundice); the Sefel graber "digger in the dust", who claims to be able to find buried treasure; and so forth. The "Rotwelsch vocabulary" contains cant terms for many common things and actions connected with the beggars' profession. Noteworthy in it is a perceptible percentage of Hebrew words, presumably entering the jargon via Yiddish, such as *Adone* "God" < Hebrew *'adonay*; *acheln* "eat" < *'ākal*; *betzam* "egg" < *bēṣāh*, pl. *bēṣīm*; *bosshart* "meat" < *bāśār*; *bsaffot* "letter" < *sēper*; *gfar* "village" < *kəpār* (whether absolute or construct form); and *lehem* "bread" < *leḥem*.

In England likewise, the problem of the "sturdy beggar", the able-bodied vagrant who refused to work, had attracted the attention of the authorities since the time of Edward III's Statute of Labourers (1349). But it was in the Tudor period that the problem became perceptibly more acute for the authorities; the hordes of beggars roaming the countryside grew, and their activities became a recognised social problem. By 1594, the Lord Mayor of London, Sir John Spenser, estimated the number of mendicant poor in the capital alone at 12,000.²¹ The reasons behind the aggravating of this problem are not difficult to discern. In the course of the 16th century, the monasteries were suppressed and charitable endowments secularised; the relief dispensed had been haphazard and may well have created dependents upon charity rather than decreased their numbers, but such dependents had not been driven to throng the towns or to form organised bands, as happened now. The Tudor peace, coming after the civil strife of the 15th century, involved the disbandment of noble households and private armies of retainers, many of whom now took to the roads;

²⁰ The widespread and often indiscriminate granting by various legal and ecclesiastical bodies of licences to beg (e.g. for the ransom of Christian captives held by the Moors) was an important contributory cause of the increase in begging in Tudor England; see F. Aydelotte, *Elizabethan rogues and vagabonds* (Oxford 1913), 23 ff.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

and there were always numbers of discharged soldiers and sailors, who were recognised as deserving of charity and usually therefore provided with official licenses to beg. But above all, it was the enclosure of arable land in southern and eastern England and in the Midlands for sheep runs, and the fact that peasants could be cleared from their holdings and the land more profitably utilised as pasture — a process which drew forth a well-known protest from Sir Thomas More in his *Utopia*²² — which swelled the ranks of the landless and homeless vagrant poor and exercised the minds of the local justices and constables. There was a fear of the violence and rapacity of the beggars' brotherhoods, a fear reflected in the nursery rhyme which begins "Hark, hark, the beggars are come to town". The stringent Elizabethan Poor Laws, which, by insisting that the able-bodied should work, nevertheless fastened on a crucial point of deterrence, viz., that the hardened beggar feared nothing more than the prospect of being made to work, was the outcome of the social problem of mass mendicancy.

As in Germany, an intriguing literature grew up; the invention of printing had already created a lively and extensive market for works on the curious and titillating topics of the beggars and their argots. The earliest exposé of the practices of cheats and swindlers is apparently that of Gilbert Walker, *A manifest detection of the most vyle and detestable use of Diceplay* (1552), a pamphlet couched in the form of a dialogue between two friends, one of whom has been cheated in London at cards and dice; his knowledgeable companion then explains the tricksters' wiles. A decade or so later, John Awdeley wrote his pamphlet *The Fraternity of Vacabondes* (1561), a mixture of first-hand observation of beggars and vagabonds and of social satire inspired by the early 16th century translation from the original German of the *Shyp of Follys*. The standard source-book on the subject of wandering beggars, however, one shamelessly pillaged by later writers, was Thomas Harman's *A Caveat or Warening for commen Cursetors vulgarely called Vagabones*, first published in 1566, and with a second edition in the following year; the subject was clearly of great topical interest. Harman was a country gentleman of Kent who questioned beggars who came to the door of his house on their practices and their cant; the authenticity of his material seems assured. Then in the closing decade of the century, the playwright Robert Greene wrote five pamphlets on "Cosenage", i.e. swindling, and "Cony-catching", i.e.

²² Cited in *ibid.*, 6.

trapping a fool or gull (1591-2). Greene himself was a Villon-like figure, an habitu   of the London underworld, who towards the end of his misspent life allegedly repented of his ways and wrote his pamphlet, dredging material from the depths of his intimate knowledge of the criminal classes of London, as a warning to the innocent and gullible.

The best authority for the tricks of the itinerant beggars and mountebanks is undoubtedly Harman. In his *Caveat or Warening for commen Cursetors* he enumerates no less than twenty-four orders or subdivisions of the beggars, each order being known by a jargon name. Thus the "Priggers of Prancers" were horse thieves; the "Palliards" were those who excited alms and compassion by means of simulated festering sores; "Abraham Men" were pretended lunatics; "Counterfeit Cranks" pretended to suffer from the falling sickness, i.e. epilepsy; "Dommers" were sham deaf mutes; "Demanders for Glimmer" were beggars who besought charity to replace losses by fire which they had supposedly suffered; "Bawdy Baskets" were women pedlers; and so forth.

Harman's work was extensively used by William Harrison in his *Description of England* prefixed to the 1587 edition of Hollinshed's *Chronicles*. Harrison denounces at length those whom he calls "beggars through their owne default", estimating their number at about 10,000. Concerning their knavish practices, he states that

The voluntarie means [of continued beggary] proceed from outward courses, as by making of corosives, and applieng the same to the more fleshie parts of their bodies; and also laieng of ratsbane, sperewort, crowfoot and such like into their whole members, thereby to raise pitifull and odious sores, and move the harts of the goers by such places where they lie, to yerne at their miserie, and thereupon bestow large almesse upon them. How artificiallie they beg, what forcible speech, and how they select and choose out words of vehemencie, whereby they doo in maner conjure or adjure the goer by to pitie their cases, I pass over to remember, as judging the name of God and Christ to be more conversant in the mouths of none, and yet the presence of the hevenlie majestie further off from no men than from this ungratious companie.

With regard to their special argot, Harrison observed

Moreover, in counterfeiting the Egyptian rogues [sc. the gypsies], they have devised a language amongst themselves, which they name *Canting* (but others pedlers French) — a speach compact thirtie years since of English, and a great number of od words of their own devising, without all order or reason : and yet such is it as none but themselves are able to understand. The first diviser thereof was hanged by the necke, — a just reward, no doubt, for his deserts, and a common end to all of that profession.²³

²³ *The rogues and vagabonds of Shakspere's youth, described by John Awdeley in his*

III

In mediaeval Islam, the voluntary beggar was a common phenomenon amongst the urban and sedentary agriculturist sectors of society, just as he was in 16th century Europe, though he was not regarded as a mass social problem for the community. There was a religious aura round almsgiving, which communicated itself to some extent to begging itself, for it could be argued that the requests of beggars facilitated almsgiving for the believer; a tradition of the Prophet related by Mālik b. Anas in his *Muwatta'* enjoins the believers, "Give to a beggar, even if he appears before you mounted on horseback!", and it was regarded as reprehensible to get out of giving to a beggar by saying that one had taken a vow or oath not to give.²⁴ There was the general veneration accorded to ascetics and those contemptuous of worldly wealth. There was a feeling that by stooping to begging, one reduced oneself to the depths of humility and self-abnegation, a motive well illustrated in an anecdote quoted by the Comte de Gobineau, who was during the years 1855-8 the French Chargé d'Affaires in Tehran. A friend of his one day met a lady with a brand-new veil and scarf, indicating considerable prosperity, who accosted him and in a piteous, whining voice asked for money. When he remonstrated with her that she had clearly no need to beg, she replied that she was in reality rich, but having a sick child, had resolved to live that particular day on charity, in order to invoke divine help through her own self-effacement!²⁵ All these religious feelings, even if only held in a vague and confused fashion, to some extent protected the beggar from legal harassment. Nevertheless, the Ḥadith strongly denounces the shameless beggar. Bukhārī and Muslim say that when the beggar appears before God on Resurrection Day, his face will appear like

Fraternitè de Vacabondes, 1561-73, Thomas Harman in his Caveat for Common Cursetors, 1567-73, and in The Groundwork of Conny-catching, 1592, ed. Edward Viles and F.J. Farnwall, The New Shakspeare Society (London 1880), Preface, IV-XII. The secondary literature on the rogues and beggars of this period is extensive; see, for instance, Aydelotte, op. cit., 114-39.

²⁴ Shihāb ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ibshihi, *al-Mustaṭraf fī kull fann yustaṭraf* (Cairo 1379/1960), II, 49, tr. G. Rat, *Al-Mostaṭraf. Recueil de morceaux choisis ça et là dans toutes les branches de connaissances réputées attrayantes* (Paris-Toulon 1899-1902), II, 69; Abū l-Qāsim Ḥusain b. Muḥammad ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā' wa-muḥāwarāt ash-shu'arā' wa-l-bulaghā'* (Cairo 1287/1870), I, 345.

²⁵ *Trois ans en Asie (de 1855 à 1858)* (Paris 1923), II, 194.

a slice of raw meat. An oft-repeated tradition says, in various wordings, "It is better for one of you to take a rope and go off to the mountain, gather firewood and sell it for your own subsistence and for alms-giving"; another one states that "He who begs from people when he already has enough, is begging for himself a burning brand", i.e. Hellfire; and Bukhārī quotes Qur'ān, ii. 274/273, on "the poor who are restrained in the way of God ... thou shalt know them by their mark — they do not beg of men importunately", and then goes on to cite the tradition that God condemns three things, malicious gossip, the squandering of wealth, and importunate begging.²⁶

The supervision of beggars was one of the duties of the *muhtasib*, the official concerned with *ḥisba*, the oversight of markets and trading and the general maintenance of moral standards and security within the open and public parts of the town.²⁷ Hence various works on political and legal practice and, more specifically, on the responsibilities of the *muhtasib*, advert to the question of control of beggars.

The well-known writer on constitutional theory, the Qāḍī Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Māwardī (d. 450/1058) says in his *al-Aḥkām as-sultāniyya* :

If the *muhtasib* sees a man engaged in begging alms from people, and he happens to know that he is in fact rich, either by his personal wealth or from his trade, he should show his disapproval of this and punish him for it ... 'Umar, may God be pleased with him, dealt thus with a group of beggars dependent on charity (*ahl aṣ-ṣadaqa*; var. *ahl aṣ-ṣuffa*, i.e. the poor and homeless who lived in the portico of the Prophet's mosque in Medina, see further on these below). If the *muhtasib* sees that the beggar gives an appearance of being well off, he points out to him that begging is prohibited for those who have no need to do it, but he does not violently reprove him for it, because of the possibility that he may be secretly in need. But if he sees a sturdy-bodied person, fully able to work, he should warn him off begging and tell him to get busy earning his living by his craft, and if the mendicant persists in his begging, he should punish him till he desists.

Māwardī adds that if the beggar still persists contumaciously in his activities, the governing authority may confiscate the beggar's personal

²⁶ Bukhārī, *Kitāb az-Zakāt*, chs. I, LIII; Muslim, with commentary of Nawawī, *Kitāb az-Zakāt*, VII, 130, 131; Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad* (Cairo 1313/1895-6), I, 164, II, 231, 257; further citations against persistent beggars in ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī's section on begging, in *op. cit.*, I, 335, 337.

²⁷ See the long article in *EI*² s.v. "Ḥisba" (Cl. Cahen, M. Talbi *et alii*).

wealth and apply it to his maintenance, or have him hired out at his own trade.²⁸

Much of the *muhtasib*'s work in regard to beggars involved seeing that they did not make nuisances of themselves in public places, above all, in the mosques and their adjuncts. These were favoured places in which beggars and down-and-outs would congregate, since the mosque always retained one of its primitive functions as a hospice for the needy, and these people were allowed to spend the night on the *maṣṭaba*, the raised platform in front of the mosque building proper, or in the *ṣuffa*, the low-roofed fore-building or portico of the mosque, utilising the rush mats there as coverings.²⁹ Since the faithful came to the mosque regularly for the worship, and were at these times particularly well disposed towards the religious act of almsgiving, the courtyard of the mosque was an ideal place for the soft touch. The *Qaṣīda sāṣāniyyas* of both Abū Dulaf al-Khazraǧī and Ṣafī d-Dīn al-Ḥillī amply demonstrate, as we shall see later, how mosques were the favoured spots for beggars and tricksters. Jaubarī, the skilful exposé of the beggars' tricks and stratagems, relates a particularly entertaining episode which happened to him at Konya in the year 616/1219. He witnessed in the mosque there an ingenious beggar who, by a simple but effective trick (sc. by presenting to the *khaṭīb* or official preacher a luxurious robe which he claimed to have found in the street and which he now passed on the preacher for disposal in some charitable purpose), so moved the preacher that the latter exhorted the congregation at large to recompense handsomely so pious and generous a person as this starving yet honest beggar: "Is there anyone like this man for his faithfulness, his self-denial and his piety, considering his poverty and need? If he had a sufficiency and were not in such penury, what would he not do? A person like this should not remain destitute amongst the Muslim community; every Muslim should give him succour and show charity towards him with something and relieve his poverty! I want every Muslim to contribute

²⁸ *Mawerdī constitutiones politicae*, ed. M. Enger (Bonn 1853), 416. tr. E. Fagnan, *Les statuts gouvernementaux ou règles de droit public et administratif* (Algiers 1915), 530-1.

²⁹ Thus Tha'ālībī states that the beggars say of one of their number who is much-travelled and experienced in begging, "He has slept with the Ṣūfis, has banged his food-bag on the side of the *mihrāb*, and has slept under the rush mats in the mosques" (*Kitāb at-Tamihīl wa-l-muḥādara*, 199).

what he can, according to his means". The money flowed in immediately, and the beggar later found that he had netted about 200 dinārs.³⁰

Two centuries or more after Jaubarī's time, the Mamlūk author Taj ad-Dīn 'Abd al-Wahhāb b. 'Alī as-Subkī (d. 881/1476-7) denounces the *Ḥarāfīsh* (sc. the groups of vagabonds, beggars, rowdies and other elements of the urban proletariat in all the main towns of Mamlūk Egypt and Syria and even in Mecca³¹) for their adoption of the profession of begging when they have no real need. They station themselves at the gates of mosques and pester the believers, but do not go in and attend the worship themselves; furthermore, they often heap curses on the believers in a fashion that would make one's flesh prickle in horror.³²

As a story like the one quoted above from Jaubarī shows, there was a danger that beggars would, if allowed, penetrate within the mosque proper and incommode the worshippers by their tricks and importunings. Hence the manuals of *ḥisba* lay special stress on the *muḥtasib*'s duty to supervise the mosque attendants (*qawama*, sing. *qayyim*) and to see that these last exclude all importunate beggars. The Egyptian author Ḍiyā' ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Qurashī, called Ibn al-Ukhuwwa (d. 729/1329) writes that

The *muḥtasib* should order the mosque attendants to stand at the door of the mosque on Fridays and prevent vagabonds (*ṣa'ālīk*) from entering for the purpose of begging, either as a group or as single individuals; for letting them in causes annoyance to the people and prevents them from devoting their attention to their prayers and worship. Indeed, these beggars completely disrupt the worshippers' performance of the *ṣalāt*, above all, those fellows who get up and spout traditions and stories for which God has sent down no authority; the general public are distracted from what they have come to do in the first place by listening to their outpourings. The *muḥtasib* must prevent them from doing this, and must send helpers for the mosque attendants to assist them in this task. This is one of the most important matters conducive to the public weal.³³

³⁰ *Kashf al-asrār wa-hatīk al-astār*, Istanbul MS. Kara Çelebizade 253 (dates from 717/1317-18), ff. 31a-34a, ed. Damascus 1302/1885, 48-52, ed. Cairo ca. 1336/1918, 26-9, largely complete translation in J. Horovitz, *Spuren griechischer Mimen im Orient* (Berlin 1905), 23-6.

³¹ See *EI*² art. "Ḥarfūsh" (W.M. Brinner), and I.M. Lapidus, *Muslim cities in the later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass. 1967), 177-83.

³² *Mu'īd an-ni'am wa-mubīd an-niqam*, ed. Muḥ. 'Alī an-Najjār *et alii* (Cairo 1367/1948), 147-8, section on "the importunate beggar in the streets", *ash-shaḥḥādī fī t-turuqāt*.

³³ *Ma'ālīm al-qurba fī aḥkām al-ḥisba*, ed. and abridged tr. by R. Levy, GMS (London

Another writer on this topic, Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Bassām al-Muḥtasib (about whose life nothing is known, but the earlier of the two extant manuscripts of his work is dated 844/1440-1), states concerning the *muḥtasib*'s duty to keep an eye on the mosques, that

He should order them (sc. the mosque attendants) to keep off the premises children and madmen, as the Lord of the Apostles commanded, also those who consume food within the mosques, sleep there, carry on any craft, sell any sort of goods, cry out after a lost beast, or just sit down there to talk to people; the divine law has ordained that mosques should be kept free from that sort of thing.³⁴

Despite these attitudes of disapproval on the part of officialdom, and despite the possibility of harassment by the *muḥtasib* and his staff, beggars seem in practice to have been left largely undisturbed. There was, of course, no Puritan and Protestant ethic, as in western Europe of the 16th and 17th centuries, emphasising above all else the intrinsic value of hard work and denouncing the idle and work-shy. The mediaeval Muslim felt very much the insecurity of life and the transience of material wealth and success. The majority view amongst Muslim theologians came to deny the existence of a smooth, natural order to life, and the view of the Ash'arī *mutakallimūn* or scholastic theologians of an atomistic, constantly-changing universe came to prevail. *Pace* the Mu'tazilī idea of *lutf wājib*, God's necessarily just path of action, the orthodox majority denied that God must inevitably follow a natural course of justice, and asserted that in theory, He was entirely arbitrary and capricious: to attempt to channel His activities into a fixed course would be to impose a limitation on His sovereign power. Hence the Muslim was fully prepared for abrupt changes of political power or personal fortune. The man who was one day a powerful amīr or vizier or merchant, might find himself a beggar the next, deprived of his office and despoiled of his wealth. This was exemplified by the fall of the Barmakī family of ministers, whose fate is frequently cited by Muslim writers as an example of overweening pride brought low; and in the 4th/10th century there was the example of the deposition and blinding, in the Byzantine fashion, of no fewer than three Abbasid Caliphs, al-Qāhir, al-Muttaqī

1938), text 178, tr. 65, cf. also text 199, tr. 78, on the *muḥtasib*'s duty to clear out beggars from the markets.

³⁴ *Nihāyat ar-rutba fī ṭalab al-ḥisba*, ed. Ḥusām ad-Dīn as-Sāmarrā'ī (Baghdad 1968), 175.

and al-Mustakfī, the first of whom could subsequently be seen in the streets of Baghdad begging for bread, an object-lesson in the fragility of worldly power. Consequently, no Muslim could be sure that he might not himself be a beggar one day and have need of the charity and compassion of his fellows.

The information about beggars and rogues in the first two centuries of Islam is rather sparse. Pre-Islamic Arabia had known the *ṣa'ālīk*, restless characters who cut themselves off from their tribes and gave themselves up to a penniless but independent life of violence and adventure, such as the poet ash-Shanfarā al-Azdi; and also the *futtāk*, desperadoes whose speciality was killing, amongst whom Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb al-Baghdādī counts the poets Ta'abbāṭa Sharran and 'Amr b. Kulthūm.³⁵ The post-Islamic philologists made several collections of the verses of these *ṣu'lūk* and *fātīk* poets.³⁶ In most of these cases, the life of a brigand and outcast was the result of deliberate choice. In ancient Bedouin society, the ties of blood and kin held the whole tribe together socially, and it was an accepted duty of the *sayyid* or tribal chief to sustain the weaker and poorer members of the tribe in times of dearth and trouble.³⁷ For those separated from their kin-groups, or travelling away from home, the hospitality dispensed as a matter of duty and honour to the *ibn as-sabīl* made recourse to formal begging rare. Even those groups below the body of free warriors who made up the corporate identity of the tribe, such as the freedmen and slaves, had an assigned if inferior place in the social structure and could expect to be supported by their masters.

With the coming of Islam and the bursting-forth of the Arabs from the peninsula, the old tribal society to some extent changed and had to adapt itself to new conditions of life. The Arabian peninsula itself probably changed least. It is true that many vital and ambitious elements were attracted northwards by the prospects of rich plunder in the conquered lands. Bedouin poets of the age of external expansion, like the Hudhalis Abū Khirāsh and Buraiq, at times lament that the once-busy encampments are now abandoned and the tribal community reduced to old men, women and children. We need not take this too

³⁵ *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar*, ed. I. Lichtenstaedter (Hyderabad 1361/1942), 192-212.

³⁶ See R. Blachère, *Histoire de la littérature arabe, des origines à la fin du XV^e siècle de J.-C.* (Paris 1952-66), I, 132, and Yūsuf Khulaif, *ash-Shu'arā' aṣ-ṣa'ālīk fī l-'aṣr al-jāhili* (Cairo 1960).

³⁷ H. Lammens, *Le berceau de l'Islam, l'Arabie occidentale à la veille de l'hégire. I. Le climat — les Bedouins* (Rome 1914), 243, 246.

literally; exaggeration was the stuff of Bedouin poetry — as the adage put it, *aḥsan ash-shi'r akdhabuhu* “the finest poetry is the most mendacious” — and if Bedouin society had been denuded of adult males, the fabric of nomadic society could not have held together. In fact, tribal society in the peninsula retained much of its pre-Islamic cohesion, and received an infusion of vigour from such sectarian movements as Khārijī egalitarianism and extremist Shī'ī messianism. The nomadic life and its corresponding social groupings could even be extended into certain areas which were similar in habitat to the Arabian desert, such as the Egyptian desert lands along both banks of the Nile, the upland plains of the Maghrib, and the steppelands of northern Syria and the Jazīra of northern Iraq.

Nevertheless, many of the Arabs now found themselves living in new milieux: in the garrison cities or *amṣār*, such as Baṣra, Kūfa, Wāsiṭ, Fustāt, Qairawān and Qazwīn, or else spread over agricultural lands, as in Syria and Jordan and in certain of the oases of Khurasan and the Iranian East. It is a cardinal feature of Umayyad history that tribal feeling and faction were never stronger than at that time, both in the *amṣār* and in the countryside, but the social organisation of the tribe was bound gradually to change in these newer surroundings. The rise of the commercial element in the towns rendered the tribal organisation there less meaningful for man in his economic aspect, and the spirit of tribalism was often transferred there to sectarian religious strife. Perhaps one should not underestimate the gradual process of penetration by Islamic religious spirit, with its emphasis on the brotherhood of believers and the superiority of piety, *taqwā*, over lineage, *ḥasab wa-nasab*, into the different layers of society, although the Bedouins have long remained resistant to the higher and more spiritual forms of Islamic religion, preferring the local *walī* or saint to the distant Allāh. Finally, one should take into account, among the sedentary Arabs in the conquered lands, the slow but perceptible process of assimilation between them and the non-Arab indigenous peoples, such as the Syriac-speaking *Nabaṭ* of Syria and Iraq, the Persians, etc.

There were, accordingly, certain currents of social and cultural tension and disturbance in the conquered lands. The older patriarchal and communal forms of social organisation, and tribal religion in the shape of local sectarian movements or attachment to local holy men, continued, but at the side of these were new trends like the growth of commercialism and individualism, bringing new attitudes towards

wealth and property, an ethical aspect of which lay in the Islamic emphasis on personal salvation. Increased urbanisation and the movement of Bedouins and non-Arab peasants to the garrison cities and the towns brought problems, as always in human society. It is difficult to generalise here, for the degree of social disruption varies according to the nature of the migrations — whether singly or in social groups — and according to the place of migration and the economic opportunities available there. But it seems likely that there developed in the early Islamic period a somewhat rootless and peripatetic element in the population of urban and sedentary areas, with a consequent predisposition towards the appearance of mendicancy.

Ethnically, these beggars of the early Islamic period must have been a very mixed group from the start. The names of the beggar chiefs retailed by Jāḥiẓ in the *Ḥadīth Khālīd ibn Yazīd* (see further on this below, pp. 34 ff.) include several which relate to Persians and Kurds, doubtless including the protagonist Khālīd himself, who is given further the Persian-sounding name of Khālāwaih and described as a client of the noble Arab family of the Muhallabīs, various members of which held high office in the East under the Umayyads.³⁸ The contributory strain of the Nabatīs, the Syriac-speaking population of Syria and Iraq, must have been equally significant, but in the matter of onomastic, is probably masked for us by the easier arabicisation of the Semitic names of these people. A study of the language of the two *Qaṣīda sāsāniyyas* which form the subject of this book shows, however, considerable influence from the Semitic-speaking lands of the Fertile Crescent and, to a lesser extent, from the Iranian world.

In a brief but stimulating monograph, *Traces of the Greek mimes in the Orient*, J. Horovitz examined the survivals in the early Christian centuries and the first period of Islam, of the Greek mimes in the Hellenised cities of the Levant, such as Alexandria, Gaza and Antioch, and asserted the existence of a continuity of characters and treatment with later Muslim popular semi-dramatic forms like the three shadow-plays of the Egyptian physician and author Muḥammad b. Dāniyāl (d. 710/1310-11), the Karagöz plays of the Turkish and Syrian shadow theatre (*khayāl az-ẓill*) and the Turkish *Orta oyunu* plays. What is

³⁸ *Kitāb al-Bukhālāʾ*, ed. Ṭāhā Ḥājirī (Cairo 1958), 46, tr. Ch. Pellat, *Le livre des avarés* (Paris 1951), 65. It was, of course, an aim of Jāḥiẓ to present generosity as the essential attribute of the Arabs and miserliness and begging as more characteristic of the 'Ajāmis.

interesting for us is the material which he assembled on what might be called a mimetic genre in Arabic literature. He attached to this the work of the storytellers and mimics (*ḥukāt*, sing *ḥākī*, *ḥākīya*) who were, according to Jāḥiẓ, able to imitate the speech of any people in the Islamic world, Khurāsānis, Yemenīs, Sindīs and Zanj, and were also able to imitate the characteristic appearance and movements of certain physically-distinctive classes of men, such as the blind.³⁹ The *Ḥikāyat Abī l-Qāsim* of Abū l-Muṭahhar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Azdī (on which see below) belongs to this genre. Likewise to be reckoned amongst Arabic literary forms influenced by the mimes are the *maqāmāt* of authors like Badī' az-Zamān al-Hamadhānī and Ḥarirī, whose heroes Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Iskandarī and Abū Zaid as-Sarūjī belong very much to the Banū Sāsān or confraternity of tricksters (the whole question of the Banū Sāsān and the *maqāmāt* is considered below, pp. 96-103). Horovitz also discussed in detail the actual passing of the Greek feminine noun *μῦμα* into Arabic before the coming of Islam as *mūmisa* "female mime-player, strolling player > whore", and the masculine form *μῦμος* into Syriac in the sense of "mimic > buffoon, clown" (as in the title of chapter XV of Barhebraeus's *Laughable stories*, that chapter headed *Tunnāyā mafṣeḥānā de-anṣhīn mīmsā we-qomiqā* "Amusing stories of mimics and comedians" ⁴⁰).⁴¹ Some of this class of story-tellers and dramatic performers may have held positions of some prestige in society before the coming of Islam, and may have retained something of this respect for a while; but the lower fringes of these professions must have merged almost imperceptibly into the general layers of people living by their wits and constituting an element of the Banū Sāsān.

The persistence within the new Islamic religion of an ascetic strain, derived from Eastern Christianity, may have contributed to a growth in mendicancy in the Islamic lands. The borderline between the Muslim ascetic and Ṣūfī who had thrown off the trammels of personal possessions and had come to rely on the offerings of the faithful, and the beggar and scrounger pure and simple, was a fine one. No guise was

³⁹ *Kitāb al-Bayān wa-t-tabyīn*, ed. 'Abd as-Salām Muḥ. Hārūn (Cairo 1366/1947), I, 69-70.

⁴⁰ *The laughable stories*, ed. and tr. A.E. Wallis Budge (London 1897), text 105-13, tr. 129-39.

⁴¹ *Spuren griechischer Mimen im Orient, mit einem Anhang über das ägyptische Schattenspiel von Friedrich Kern* (Berlin 1905), 16-33, 77-88, chs. "Mimische Darstellungen im Islam" and "Mimus im arabischen".

more easily adopted by the latter group than of the dervish who had voluntarily adopted poverty, *faqr*, and utter dependence on God as his provider, *tawakkul*, even though the Ṣūfī orders, as they later became constituted, generally endeavoured to distinguish their own requests for alms, as being a grateful contribution from the believers for the upkeep of holy men like their own members, from plain begging.⁴² Notable also in any consideration of influences from Eastern Christianity on early Islamic vagabondage and trickery is the character of the "wise fool" or "fool for Christ". In the period just before Islam, we have an associated figure, Simeon Salus, expositor and mocker of fools and tricksters, whose life was written in the 7th century by Leontius, Bishop of Neapolis in Cyprus. The character of the "wise fool" passed into Arabic literature as the *'āqil al-majānīn*, the pretended idiot who usually appears dressed in ascetic garb and who often surprises people by his pearls of wisdom; frequently he achieves his aim by affecting this veneer of simplicity and innocence, in this way resembling the heroes of the *maqāmāt*.⁴³ One of the best-known of these "wise fools" in early Islamic times was Abū Wuhaib Buhlūl b. 'Amr al-Kūfī, who flourished in the caliphate of Hārūn ar-Rashīd, and whose exploits have even passed into the *Thousand and one nights*.⁴⁴ Indeed, the literature on these *'uqalā' al-majānīn* becomes a minor genre in itself, typified by a work like the *Akhhbār 'uqalā' al-majānīn* of Abū l-Qāsim al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad an-Nishāpūrī (d. 406/1015-16), but the figure of the "wise fool" is found equally commonly in popular mystical literature.⁴⁵

Many of the early Islamic beggars who claimed a religious motivation for their mendicant activities traced their profession and condition backwards, in the fashion of a Ṣūfī order's *silsila* or chain of spiritual descent, to the so-called *Ahl aṣ-Ṣuffa* "Companions of the portico [of the Prophet's mosque in Medina]". These were historically a group of Muḥammad's Companions who lived in this portico, dedicating their

⁴² Ivanow noted in Khurasan in the early part of this century that the dervishes there were prohibited from begging (*gadā'ī*), except for the Khāksār or Ḥaidari orders, who regarded it as the lawful collection of just dues, *ḥaqq-i ṭalab*, begging in these orders being normally left to the *murīds* or novices. See his "Some Persian darwish songs", *JASB*, N.S. XXIII (1927), 237 ff.

⁴³ Horovitz, *op. cit.*, 50-3.

⁴⁴ See *EI*² art. "Buhlūl" (Pellat).

⁴⁵ For a discussion of Nishāpūrī's work and its forerunners, see P. Loosen, "Die weisen Narren des Naisābūrī", *ZA*, XXVII (1912), 184-229.

lives to pious exercises and worship except when called out to participate in the raids or *ghazawāt* of the Muslim forces. The sources on early Šūfism and the biographies of the religious scholars name many of these persons, of the stamp of Abū Huraira, and say that their numbers reached up to 400. However, Watt has dismissed much of this as legend and has suggested that the *Ahl aṣ-Ṣuffa* were primarily composed not of destitute Muslim devotees but of tribesmen visiting Muḥammad from outlying parts of Arabia and without confederates in Medina to shelter them, hence allowed by the Prophet to live in the outer part of his mosque.⁴⁶

But the figure most frequently mentioned in connection with rogues and beggars is, of course, the legendary Shaikh Sāsān, whose followers are accordingly known as the Banū Sāsān. One could describe Shaikh Sāsān as their patron saint, except that he has no sort of religious aura. An oft-repeated story, retailed from the time of the Persian author and translator Ibn al-Muqaffa' onwards, says that Sāsān was the son of the Persian Emperor Bahman b. Isfandiyār, but was displaced from the succession to his father by the child of his sister Humāy, who was also his father's wife. Hence he fled, wandering through the world, never settling, and gathering round himself a band of like-minded roamers, the nucleus of the Banū Sāsān.⁴⁷ Various endings to the story are actually given in the sources, e.g. that he settled down at Nishāpūr,⁴⁸ or that he joined the Kurds in the province of Media (the Islamic Jibāl, 'Irāq 'Ajamī) and lived as a shepherd amongst the nomadic Kurds.⁴⁹ Other explanations say that the Persians as a nation took to mendicancy after the Arab conquest of the 7th century, and excited pity and commiseration by claiming to be scions of the dispossessed Sāsānid royal house.

Before dismissing stories like these as patent absurdities, *ex post facto* inventions to explain the term "Banū Sāsān", one should bear in mind that a process whereby the name of a fallen dynasty is ironically or satirically applied to a fallen dynasty seems psychologically possible, and is apparently attested in another period of Islamic history. Edward Lane recorded in his *Manners and customs of the modern*

⁴⁶ W. Montgomery Watt, *EI*² art. *s.v.*

⁴⁷ Thus in Muḥammad Ḥusain b. Khalaf's *Burhān-i qāṭi'*, *s.v.* "Sāsān".

⁴⁸ Thus in the version of the *Shāh-nāma* of Firdausī, see ed. Turner Macan, (Calcutta 1829), III, 1247-8, abridged tr. by R. Levy, *The epic of the Kings* (London 1967), 219-20.

⁴⁹ Thus in Dinawari, *al-Akhbār al-tiwāl*, ed. 'Abd al-Mun'im 'Āmir and Jamāl ad-Dīn ash-Shayyāl (Cairo 1960), 27. For other early Arabic sources, see Horowitz, *op. cit.*, 23 n.l.

Egyptians that the *ghawāzī* or dancing-girls "call themselves 'Barāmi-keh' or 'Barmek'ees", and boast that they are descended from the famous family of that name who were the objects of the favour, and afterwards of the capricious tyranny, of Hārūn Er-Rasheed ... but as a friend of mine lately observed to me, they probably have no more right to call themselves 'Barāmikeh' than because they resemble that family in liberality, though it is liberality of a different kind". The *ghajar* or gypsies, who made their living mainly by fortune-telling, likewise traced their ancestry back to the Barmakīs, but to a different branch.⁵⁰ Muḥammad 'Abduh, in his commentary on Badi' az-Zamān al-Hamadhānī's *maqāma sāsāniyya*, said that he himself had heard the disapprobatory term "Barmakī" in Egypt, and considered it a survival from the period after the fall of that family, when it became a term of disparagement.⁵¹ One can also discern elsewhere a widespread tendency for groups like vagabonds, beggars and gypsies to call themselves by high-sounding names. An etymology on these lines for the title of the 16th and early 17th century French beggar leader, *Grand Coësre*, has been suggested above, p. 7; and E. Littmann noted that vagabonds in northwestern Germany called themselves "Monarchen", and that in western Anatolia and amongst the Kurds both beggars and gypsies call themselves *beg-zāda* "sons of princes, nobles".⁵²

Another suggestion has been that "Sāsān" here goes back to Sanskrit *śaśa* "hare", an animal who appears as a character in the *Panchatantra* and thence in the Arabic *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, where he tricks the lion and is characterised by his craftiness. Finally, Ivanow put forward an etymology from Persian *sās* "a parasitic worm or insect attacking men or animals",⁵³ and he has further mentioned the existence of a criminally-inclined gypsy tribe in the Panjab called Sāsi, who use two jargons, one of the usual Indian-Gypsy origin, and the other a criminal argot.⁵⁴

Whatever the origin of the term "Banū Sāsān", it became a blanket

⁵⁰ Ed. Paisley and London 1895, 385, in ch. XIX "Public dancers", and 393, in ch. XX "Serpent-charmers, and performers of legerdemain tricks, etc.".

⁵¹ *Maqāmāt* (Beirut 1924), 97 n.l.

⁵² *Zigeuner-arabisch, Wortschatz und Grammatik der arabischen Bestandteile in den morgenländischen Zigeunersprachen* (Bonn-Leipzig 1930), 38.

⁵³ "An old Gypsy-Darwish jargon", *JASB*, N.S. XVIII (1922), 377, citing J. Vullers, *Lexicon persico-latinum*, s.v., with *shawāhid* from Sanā'i.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 377 n.l. citing Sir George Grierson, *Linguistic survey of India. XI Gypsy languages* (Calcutta 1922), 49-70.

designation for rogues and beggars of all kinds, so that *sāsānī* has become a standard term for "beggar" in Persian. The connection with the tricks of these swindlers also explains why Ḥājji Khalīfa uses the adjective *sāsānī* in the sense of "connected with magic or slight-of-hand" in his classification of the various branches of magic: *'ilm al-ḥiyāl as-sāsāniyya* "science of artifices and trickery".⁵⁵ The great breadth of meaning which the term "Banū Sāsān" came to encompass is well seen in the definition given by Jaubari in chapter VI of his *Kashf al-asrār*, "Unveiling of the secrets of the Banū Sāsān and their activities". He emphasises the all-embracing nature of the designation: within it are included those who practice behind-the-back trickery (*aṣḥāb an-naḡāmīs*); the religiously-motivated poor and the dervishes (*al-fuqarā' wa-l-mudarwizūn*); the members of the Zuṭṭ (here, the gypsies), etc., afflicted with bodily infirmities; those who teach tricks to animals like bears, monkeys, goats and donkeys, and who teach cats and mice to be on friendly terms with each other;⁵⁶ those who make beards grow on women;⁵⁷ those who claim to have an impediment, or blindness, and every possible sort of disease; those who parade dropsical limbs, ulcers and open sores, etc. They also include in their ranks some pilgrims who ride along on camels, and popular preachers (*wu'āz*), these last being the most exalted class amongst the Banū Sāsān.⁵⁸

Jaubari's inclusion of popular preachers amongst the Banū Sāsān requires some comment. His third chapter is in fact specifically devoted to the wiles of these *wu'āz* and the tricks which they employ for wheedling money out of their audiences (for an analysis of his chapter, see below). Since religious emotion and fear — the need to propitiate the Deity, to seek His intervention in matters of worldly prosperity and bodily health, to avoid the possibility of divine punishment and to secure admission to the felicities of paradise — have until very recent times at least been one of the mainsprings of human conduct,

⁵⁵ *Kashf az-zunūn*, ed. G. Flügel (Leipzig and London 1835-58), I, 34-5.

⁵⁶ Training seemingly incompatible and mutually-destructive creatures to live together in harmony was a common trick of the Sāsānis; see Ṣafī d-Dīn's *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, v. 52, where the poet boasts that he has successfully brought together in one place a cat, a rat and a viper.

⁵⁷ The text of de Goeje (see below) has "those who make beards grow on the beardless" (*as-sunūf* for *an-nisā'*); the phrase does not appear in the printed editions.

⁵⁸ Kara Çelebizade 253 manuscript, f. 29a, ed. Damascus, 44, ed. Cairo, 24-5; the résumé given by de Goeje in his "Gaubari's 'entdeckte Geheimnisse'", 493, is clearly based on a slightly different wording in his manuscript (= Leiden 1233/Warner 191).

the claim to gnosis or to special intercessory powers has always been a singularly efficacious way into the pockets of the pious and credulous. The works of Abū Dulaf, Jaubārī, Ṣafī d-Dīn, the *maqāmāt* writers, and many others exposing the abuses in popular religion, show that these claims have been exploited to the hilt amongst Muslims and Christians alike in the Middle East.

In the earliest Islam, there was a recognised and dignified place for the preacher of moral homilies and of penitential exhortations, the *wā'iz*. C.H. Becker saw in the admonitory verses of the Christian poet of Ḥīra, 'Adī b. Zaid, a pre-Islamic forerunner of this homiletic and penitential note in early Islamic literature, and expressly connected both the external form and the content of 'Adī's poetry with the parallel Eastern Christian literature, as seen in the homilies of Cyril of Alexandria and Ephraim the Syrian.⁵⁹ The Prophet himself described his role as that of a "warner" (*nadhīr*), and the whole Qur'ān is characterised as an "admonition" (*wā'iz, mau'iza*) and a "reminding" of God's purposes and plan (*dhikrā*).⁶⁰

However, it is probable that the whole institution of *wā'iz* as it developed in Islam was as much the continuation of the pre-Islamic tribal institution of the *khutba*, the oration of the tribe's spokesman or chief pronounced on the occasion of battle or at some other significant moment when it was necessary to rally or inspire the tribe, as an institution borrowed from or influenced by Eastern Christianity. As is well-known, with the coming of Islam, the tribal *khaṭīb* was transformed into the deliverer of the sermons which were an integral part of the Friday congregational worship. We find preachers employed in the conquering Arab armies, haranguing and encouraging the troops by promises of divine favour and paradise as the reward for martyrdom

⁵⁹ See his "Ubi sunt qui ante nos in mundo fuere", in *Islamstudien* (Leipzig 1924-32), I, 506-8; Becker remarks here, "Es ist eben die Welt [sc. the urban life of Christian Ḥīra as opposed to the desert milieu of the other pre-Islamic, Bedouin poets], die aus den vorangestellten Zitaten zu uns spricht, und es ist natürlich kein Zufall, dass 'Adī nicht nur die Gedankenwelt, sondern auch die rhetorischen Ausdrucksformen der christlichen Predigt übernimmt ..." (*ibid.*, 507). The existence of such influences in 'Adī b. Zaid's poetry is quite probable; 'Adī is one of the very few Jāhili poets whose Christian parentage and personal faith is undisputed, see *ET*² art. s.v. (F. Gabrieli), and C. Hechaïmé, *Louis Cheikho et son livre "Le Christianisme et la littérature chrétienne en Arabie avant l'Islam"*, *étude critique* (Beirut 1967), 162, 183-4.

⁶⁰ The Qur'ānic usages are discussed in detail by J. Pedersen in his article "The Islamic preacher: wā'iz, mudhakkir, qāṣṣ", *Ignaz Goldziher memorial volume* (Budapest 1948, Jerusalem 1958), I, 227-8.

on the field of battle. Various terms are found designating these preachers: *wā'iz* "admonisher", *qārī* "Qur'ān reader",⁶¹ and *qāṣṣ* "recounter of stories, *qīṣaṣ*". The terms *wā'iz* and *qāṣṣ*, together with that of *mudhakkir* "one who reminds people of God and His precepts", occur throughout the first Islamic centuries as terms designating popular preachers, who, unlike the *khutabā*, did not confine their orations to Friday mornings, but might be heard in mosques and public places, in streets and markets, at any time of the day and week. The earliest *qūṣṣāṣ* do seem to have been appointed by the Caliphs on an official basis, and indeed the proto-*qāṣṣ*, Tamīm ad-Dārī, a Palestinian Christian convert to the new faith, is said to have been a Companion of the Prophet in Medina and then to have been given permission to preach subsequently by the Caliph 'Umar; but on the whole, these classes of popular preachers and story-tellers were not normally in receipt of salaries from the state as were the Friday mosque *khutabā*.

In so far as it is possible to differentiate theoretically between the various classifications of *wā'iz*, *mudhakkir* and *qāṣṣ*, they are defined by Ibn al-Jauzī (ca. 511-97/ca. 1117-1201) in the first work devoted specially to these popular preachers, his *Kitāb al-Qūṣṣāṣ wa-l-mudhakkirīn*.⁶² According to him, *wā'iz* consists of the instilling of fear to soften the heart; *tadhkir* is the informing of people of the blessings bestowed on them by God, urging them to show appropriate gratitude and avoidance of disobedience; whilst *qāṣṣ* is the recounting and interpreting of stories from the past which have an educational or devotional value.⁶³ In practice, it was not always easy to differentiate between the groups, and the terms became largely interchangeable, as the very title of Ibn al-Jauzī's book implies.

The *qāṣṣ* was thus not infrequently an influential figure in popular eyes, for whereas the dialectical subtleties of the scholastic theologians and the legal niceties of the traditionist and lawyers were quite above the heads of the masses, the edifying tales of the story-tellers made some sort of religious knowledge available to the illiterate majority.

⁶¹ This is the traditional interpretation of *qārī*, but for a newer, quite different explanation of the term, see M.A. Shaban, *Islamic history A.D. 600-750 (A.H. 132), a new interpretation* (Cambridge 1971), 50-1, and G.H.A. Juynboll, "The Qur'ān in early Islamic history", *JESHO*, XVI (1973), 113-29.

⁶² Recently edited from the unique Leiden manuscript by M.S. Swartz (Beirut 1971). Ibn al-Jauzī's work was followed by others on the same topic, such as Suyūṭī's *Taḥdhīr al-khawāṣṣ min akādhīb al-qāṣṣ* (printed Cairo 1351/1932).

⁶³ *K. al-Qūṣṣāṣ wa-l-mudhakkirīn*, Introd. = text, 9-11, tr. 96-8.

Their function thus resembled that of the friars in mediaeval Christendom, whose very origin was an attempt to bridge the gulf which had grown up between a materially well-endowed but spiritually distant ecclesiastical establishment, and a populace in need of educational and devotional guidance on their own level. Certain *quṣṣāṣ* secured by the exercise of their narrative skills such a hold over their audience that the latter were prepared to defend them against established authority; the great Ṭabarī had his house in Baghdad besieged and pelted with stones by the city mob, because he had protested at the heretical Qur'ānic exegesis of a popular story-teller.⁶⁴ It is possible that these story-tellers had their own specially-demarcated "beats" or territories within towns and jealously guarded them against intruders, if the adage "One *qāṣṣ* does not love another *qāṣṣ*" is any guide.⁶⁵ It may be further noted that there was a geographical aspect to the popularity and activities of the *quṣṣāṣ* in the Islamic world. The *loci classici* for them were Syria, Iraq, the Iranian lands and the east. The traditionists were always resolute foes of the story-tellers, because the latter often perverted the sacred traditions. Hence according to Suyūṭī, Mālik b. Anas had forbidden them to enter the mosques of Medina, hence the *quṣṣāṣ* did not flourish much in the Ḥijāz.⁶⁶ The same held true for the Muslim West, where adherence to the Mālikī law school and reverence for the Islamic traditions were strong, and where the excesses of such classes as beggars and dervishes were apparently more circumscribed than elsewhere. The Maghribī Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad al-Fāsī, called Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 737/1336-7), repeats older authorities that the practices of *wa'z* and *qaṣaṣ* are reprehensible innovations, *bida'*, and that the Mālikī rite held *qaṣaṣ* to be blameworthy, *makrūh*.⁶⁷ The Moroccan traveller 'Alī b. Maimūn al-Idrīsī (d. 917/1511) denounces the popular preachers whom he heard in Damascus and elsewhere as mere *quṣṣāṣ*, worthy of consignment to the lowest level in hell and more inimical to the Islamic faith, because

⁶⁴ Suyūṭī, *op. cit.*, cited by Goldziher, *Muhammedanische Studien* (Halle 1888-90), II, 168.

⁶⁵ Tha'ālibī, *Yatīmat ad-dahr fī mahāsin ahl al-'aṣr*, ed. M.M. 'Abd al-Ḥamid (Cairo 1375-7/1956-8), III, 159.

⁶⁶ Suyūṭī, *op. cit.*, cited in *Muhammedanische Studien*, *loc. cit.*

⁶⁷ *Kitāb al-Madkhāl*, cited thus by Pedersen, "The Islamic preacher", but the correct title of this work should read *Kitāb Madkhāl ash-shar' ash-sharīf*, see Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl., II, 95.

of the perverted religious views which they purveyed, than the Jews, Christians and Magians.⁶⁸

The opportunities for exploiting the trust of the unlettered Muslim masses constituted a strong temptation for the class of story-tellers in general, and many succumbed here. Goldziher was the first to collect material on the class of *quṣṣāṣ* and to explain the odium that later gathered round them, at least in the eyes of the proud ulema.⁶⁹ Concerning this official disapproval, one may note that in 279/982 the officers of the Caliph al-Mu'taḍid ordered all story-tellers, astrologers and diviners to be cleared from the streets and mosques in Baghdad, and five years later, the prohibition was renewed.⁷⁰ In an access of disdain for the *profanum vulgus*, Mas'ūdī adverts to the stupidity and credulousness of the masses, upon whom charlatans of all kinds preyed: they crowd around the man with dancing bears or monkeys, round the hypocritical, false ascetic (*muta'abbid mutanammis mumakhrig*) and around the mendacious story-teller (*qāṣṣ kadhdhāb*).⁷¹ However, it should be noted that in the first half of the 3rd/9th century, Jāḥiẓ generally speaks of the function of *qāṣṣ* with approval. In one of his major works, he gives a list of the *quṣṣāṣ* of Baṣra, including al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, immediately after he has given lists of the eloquent ascetics and Ṣūfis; the degeneration of the profession into one of charlatans would therefore appear to have begun after Jāḥiẓ's time.⁷²

Ibn al-Jauzī's purpose in his book was not to condemn the class of preachers and story-tellers out of hand, for he believed that they had a recognised place in the scheme of religious instruction, but to set their profession on a sound moral and intellectual footing and to provide a textbook for the tyro preacher.⁷³ The profession is thus, in his eyes, fundamentally a reputable, even laudable one, but it is liable to abuses, and these Ibn al-Jauzī points out, especially in his

⁶⁸ Goldziher, "Ali b. Mejmūn al-Maḡribī und sein Sittenspiegel des östlichen Islam. Ein Beitrag zur Culturgeschichte", *ZDMG*, XXVIII (1874), 319-21; *idem*, *Muhammedanische Studien*, II, 168.

⁶⁹ In *op. cit.*, II, 161-70. The role of the *qāṣṣ* was further discussed by Mez in *Die Renaissance des Islāms*, 314-15, Eng. tr., 326-7.

⁷⁰ Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, III, 2131, 2165.

⁷¹ *Murūj adh-dhahab*, ed. and tr. C. Barbier de Meynard and Pavet de Courteille (Paris 1861-77), V, 86.

⁷² *K. al-Bayān wa-t-tabayīn*, I, 367-9; cf. Pellat, *Le milieu baṣrien et la formation de Ḥāḥiẓ* (Paris 1953), 108-16.

⁷³ Thus according to Swartz in his Introduction, 67 ff.

tenth chapter, which is a warning against pseudo-preachers and story-tellers who do introduce *bida'* and unjustifiable novelties, *aḥdāth*. Amongst many things, he cites the artificial inducing of tears and bodily trembling (see for this the citation from Jaubarī, below p. 112) and the inducing of spurious mystical states, *tawājjud*. Also, some *quṣṣāṣ* are over-familiar with womenfolk and spend their meetings reciting passionate and erotic Ṣūfī poetry or even urging people to drink wine. Certainly, the story-tellers' stock-in-trade included a large number of the popular legends and romances circulating in the Near East, many of which had only vaguely religious associations but were avidly swallowed by the masses, always receptive of a good story. Ibn al-Jauzī mentions some of the perversions of Biblical stories, including those connected with Joseph and Zulaikhā, or Moses' ascent of Mount Sinai, or David's relations with Uriah the Hittite; the story-tellers did not scruple to invent the most outrageous explanations or to expound the most impossible petty details here.⁷⁴

Abū Dulaf alludes in the *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya* to the story-tellers and their like as being of the company of Sāsān. One trickster acts as a *qāṣṣ* and retails apocryphal Jewish legends (*Isrā'īliyyāt*) "span upon span", i.e. brief, chatty anecdotes, *shibriyyāt* (v. 41). This *qāṣṣ* may well have a confederate in the listening crowd, who is called the *mukawwiz*; the story-teller directs the audience to give alms to this man, and afterwards the two of them share out the takings (v.32). Others station themselves in prominent positions on the roads and declaim the Muslim traditions, often with their own accretions and titillating details, warning their audience violently (*yushaddidūn*) against such vices as winedrinking and sodomy; or else they may declaim poetry and inflammatory stories about the martyrdoms of the Alids (thus attracting contributions from the Shī'īs), and other stories about the virtues of Abū Bakr (thereby tapping the purses of the Sunnis) (vv. 32, 56, 63-5).⁷⁵ Similarly, Ṣafī d-Dīn relates in his *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, "How often have I acted as a story-teller (*qāṭī*, glossed as *muḥaddith al-qīṣaṣ*), making people absorbed in my stories and verses, and how many times have I recounted stories in a mad, deranged fashion, swaying my head from side to side whilst ranting and declaiming" (v. 25).

⁷⁴ K. *al-Quṣṣāṣ wa-l-muḥakkirīn*, text 93 ff., tr. 170 ff.

⁷⁵ Goldziher was the first to note the references in these verses, in *Muhammedanische Studien*, II, 165-6, 169.

IV

It is in the Islamic world of the 3rd/9th century that a definite interest in low life and in the vulgar, even criminal, elements of the population appears. The new trend was undoubtedly related to the progress of urbanisation and sophistication of life in this period, as was pointed out by G.E. von Grunebaum.⁷⁶ Previously, literature had tended to reflect the Islamic ideals of high moral seriousness and such attendant virtues as liberality, hospitality, fortitude in battle, pride in one's kin and family, etc. The reverse of these qualities was now exemplified in *sukhf*, scurrilousness and shamelessness, and *mujūn*, levity and scoffing, which begin to intrude into the themes of Arabic literature. In the field of poetry, this development is particularly associated with Wāliba b. al-Ḥubāb (d. ca. 170/786-7) and his pupil Abū Nuwās (d. between 198/813 and 200/815), and reaches its peak in such a figure as Ibn al-Ḥajjāj (d. 391/1001), on whom see further below, pp. 64-5. In prose writing, there is a general lightening in tone and treatment of subjects in the sphere of *adab*, the appearance of new themes for literary composition, and a growing popularity of witty and amusing tales, *nawādir*, trends which can be well seen in the work of Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868-9). Parallel with the developments in poetry, one finds amongst prose writers that one aspect of the new themes is the erotic and near-pornographic, what in modern Arabic parlance is called *al-adab al-makshūf*. Some note will be taken below of the *Ḥikāyat Abī l-Qāsim* of Abū l-Muṭahhar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Azdī (*floruit* early 5th/10th century), which is a blend of prose and the pornographic poetry of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj (see below, pp. 66-7); and as a typical example of the treatment of erotic topics within an *adab* work, one might cite the section on *mujūn* and *sukhf* in the *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'* of ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. 502/1108-9), which deals in a light-hearted, anecdotal way, with what the author details as "sodomy, male prostitution, the passive role in homosexuality, effeminacy, masturbation, the homosexual secret assailant (*dabīb*), pimping and fornication".⁷⁷

Amongst prose writers of the 3rd/9th century we have the Kūfan Abū l-'Anbas Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm aṣ-Ṣaimarī (d. 275/888-9). This *qāḍī* of Ṣaimara near Baṣra was a celebrated calligrapher, an

⁷⁶ In his article "Aspects of Arabic urban literature, mostly in the ninth and tenth centuries", *Al-Andalus*, XX (1955), 259-81.

⁷⁷ Ed. Cairo, II, 143-68.

astrologer, a *nadīm* or boon-companion of Caliphs like al-Mutawakkil and al-Mu'tamid, and a friend of the poet Buḥturī. He further wrote "diverting compositions" (*taṣānīf hazliyya*), including a *Kitāb Masāwī al-'awāmm wa-akhbār as-sifla wa-l-aghtām* "Book of the defects of the common people and stories of the lower orders and illiterate classes". Others of his many works listed by Ibn an-Nadīm include intriguing titles like "Refutation of the astrologers", "Refutation of the quack doctors",⁷⁸ "The superiority of the ladder over the staircase", "The book of bores", "Remarkable stories about pimps", "Book of tribadists and whores", "Book of stirring-up concerning masturbation", and "The superiority of the anus over the mouth".⁷⁹ Surveying these titles, one inevitably thinks that Ṣaimarī must have been a second Jāḥiẓ in the breadth of his interest in human types and human foibles and in his love of the *recherché* and paradoxical. Whether he was, in fact, influenced by his slightly older contemporary, whom he may well have met in the courts of Iraq, or whether he simply lifted his material from Jāḥiẓ's own works and had no real originality of his own, is unknown, since only his technical, astrological works have survived.⁸⁰ But the latter alternative seems distinctly probable, since Ibn al-Qiftī says that "he was suspected of plundering other people's works and claiming them as his own".⁸¹

Nevertheless, plagiarist or not, Ṣaimarī achieved some lasting fame as an exponent of the life of vagrancy and of the underworld, for Badī' az-Zamān al-Hamadhānī made him the narrator and hero of one of his *maqāmāt*, that of Ṣaimara. In this, Ṣaimarī is made to say that he was once rich and kept open house, until, like Timon of Athens, he found himself destitute, and his one-time friends from the *beau monde* of Baghdad all deserted him: "I had been Abū l-'Anbas ("father of the lion"), and now I had become Abū 'Afallas and Abū Faq'as (explained by 'Abduh in his commentary as two proverbial terms for rootless, totally obscure persons, but the first probably contains a

⁷⁸ Following here Yāqūt's *mutaṭabbibīn* rather than Ibn an-Nadīm's *mutaṭayyibīn* "perfumed ones".

⁷⁹ *Fihrist*, ed. G. Flügel (Leipzig 1871-2), I, 151-2, 358, cf. 278, tr. B. Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm, a tenth century survey of Muslim culture* (New York and London 1970), I, 332-3, II, 864, cf. II, 659. Yāqūt, *Irshād*, VI, 402-3, reproduces this list, but with variants.

⁸⁰ See *GAL*, Suppl. I, 396. Ibn an-Nadīm says that he had seen an autograph copy of Ṣaimarī's *Kitāb Masāwī al-'awāmm*, see *Fihrist*, I, 358, tr. II, 864.

⁸¹ *Ta'rikh al-ḥukamā'*, ed. J. Lippert (Leipzig 1903), 410.

reminiscence of *aflasa* "to be bankrupt")". Hence he resolved to become a wandering beggar, and in the course of his journeyings acquired a vast stock of experience and knowledge about such matters as "the verses of the elegant people and the levity of the amusing classes", *ash'ār al-mutaṣarrifīn*⁸² *wa-sukhf al-mulhīn*, and about all sorts of shady characters and tricksters, detailed by Badī' az-Zamān in an interesting passage. Returning to Baghdad, famous and wealthy once more, he is able to exact a sweet revenge on his former false friends.⁸³

Mas'ūdī mentions a certain Abu 'Aqqāl the Secretary, who also wrote a book on the manners of the lower classes, *Kitāb fī Akhlāq al-'awāmm*, which the author entitled *al-Mulhī* "that which is amusing, diverting"; the work does not seem to have survived. It is indicative of the broadening effect of Jāḥiẓ and his imitators in introducing these new themes into Arabic literature that Mas'ūdī himself says that if he were not afraid of rambling on too much, he would retail at length remarkable stories about the lower orders, their way of life, their morals, their various subdivisions, etc.⁸⁴

Hence we must turn to the commanding figure of Jāḥiẓ himself (*ca.* 160-255/*ca.* 776 to 868-9), the first author from whose work on these topics anything substantial has survived. The wide-ranging intellectual curiosity of Jāḥiẓ and his interest in what we would now call sociology, anthropology and psychology, are well-known. Moreover, in his treatment of these questions, he adopted a refreshing approach for reader, based on the premise that, however serious the subject under review, it could be made more interesting and thus achieve greater effect, if only one leavened the lump of solemnity by the insertion of a few amusing anecdotes or by the throwing out of some witty or paradoxical observations.⁸⁵ He was well aware that, in treating of new themes in his prose works, he would have to employ a vocabulary of a nature more familiar in *ḥijā'*, satirical poetry, with all its scatological crudities, than in polite literature. He nevertheless defended his use of *rafath*, unseemly language, as necessary for the proper discussing of his subjects. Thus in the introduction to his short *Kitāb*

⁸² Reading thus for 'Abduh's *mutaṣarrifīn*.

⁸³ Ed. 'Abduh, 215-24, tr. W.J. Prendergast, *The Maqāmāt of Badī' al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī* (London-Madras 1915), 156-64.

⁸⁴ *Murāj adh-dhahab*, V, 88-9. I have not been able to find any further references to this Abū 'Aqqāl.

⁸⁵ See *EI*² art. "al-Djidd wa'l-hazl" (Pellat).

Mufākharat al-jawāri wa-l-ghilmān "Book of the vaunting-contest between slavegirls and slaveboys", in which the relative advantages of the two categories are rehearsed, he points out that the most revered of the founding fathers of Islam, such as the Patriarchal Caliphs and 'Abdallāh b. 'Abbās, used these words, and he puts forward the general consideration that "These words have only come into existence so that exponents of the [Arabic] language may use them. If it were the accepted opinion that they should never be pronounced, then there would be no point in their having been created in the first place, and it would be proper for the preservation of the purity of the Arabic language that these names and expressions (sc. words like "vulva", "penis" and "copulation") should be eradicated from it. But the person who said that 'There is an appropriate word for every situation' was completely correct".⁸⁶

A glance through the catalogue of Jāḥiẓ's works compiled by Pellat shows a bewildering range of topics selected for treatment, sometimes in independent books or epistles, sometimes perhaps as sections within larger compositions — one might quote the claim of a certain British newspaper concerning its contents, "All human life is there". The activities of the lower orders and of tricksters and criminals inevitably find a place in Jāḥiẓ's works. We find amongst the titles listed by Pellat a *Risāla fī Waṣf al-'awāmm* "Epistle describing the common people"; a *Kitāb Farq mā bain al-ḥiyal wa-l-makhāriq* "Book on the difference between stratagems and tricks"; a *Kitāb Ḥiyal al-luṣūṣ* "Book of the stratagems of robbers", perhaps identical with the "Book concerning the various elements of the stratagems of robbers by day and the details of the stratagems of nocturnal thieves" mentioned in the opening lines of Jāḥiẓ's *Kitāb al-Bukhalā'*;⁸⁷ a *Kitāb Ḥiyal al-mukaddīn* "Book of the beggars' stratagems", unless again this is identical with the material on the subject in the *Kitāb al-Bukhalā'*, see below; a *Kitāb an-Nawāmīs* "Book of secret tricks"; a *Risāla fī Dhamm al-quwwād* "Epistle in condemnation of pimps";

⁸⁶ Ed. Pellat (Beirut 1957), 9-12, cited briefly in *idem*, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ, translations of selected texts* (London 1969), 270-1, also in Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Ḥayawān*, ed. Hārūn (Cairo 1356-64/1938-45), III, 40-3, with slight variations of wording, and the concluding aphorism given in full in *ibid.*, I, 201, as *li-kull maqām maqāl, wa-li-kull zamān riḥāl, wa-li-kull sāqīṭa lāqīṭa, wa-li-kull ta'ām ākīla*.

⁸⁷ Ed. Ḥājirī, I, tr. Pellat, 1.

a *Kitāb Akhlāq ash-shuṭṭār* "Book on the characteristics of mobsters"; and a *Kitāb at-Tufailiyyīn* "Book of parasites".⁸⁸

None of these works is preserved complete, and only one or two are known even in excerpts, so that the most important extant composition by Jāḥiẓ on these subjects is the "Story of Khālīd b. Yazīd" in his *Kitāb al-Bukhālā'*.⁸⁹ Khālīd b. Yazīd is described as a leader of the beggars (*mukaddūn*) who had settled down in Baṣra, in the quarter of the Banū Tamīm, towards the end of his life, where he had become notorious for his miserliness. On his deathbed, he boasts to his son that in the course of an eventful life he has ranged all over the Islamic lands as far as the frontiers in India. He has gained his living as a gypsy (? : *kājār*, *kāchār*)⁹⁰ in his youth, as a beggar, and as a popular preacher and story-teller (*qāṣṣ*), seeing in the course of these activities the insides of numerous prisons and suffering numerous tortures. He has displayed his intrepidity as a bandit leader amongst such groups as the outcasts of Jibāl, the robbers of Syria, the predatory Zuṭṭ of the Lower Iraq marshlands, the desperadoes of the Kurds and Bedouins, the violent assailants of the Baṭṭ River in Khūzistān,⁹¹ the robbers of the Qufṣ or Kūfichīs in the mountains of Kirmān and Baluchistan, the pirates of Qiqān (on the Makrān coastland of southern Baluchistan) and Qaṭar in the Persian Gulf,⁹² the masked bandits

⁸⁸ Pellat, "Ġāḥiziana III. Essai d'inventaire de l'œuvre ḡāḥizienne", *Arabica*, III (1956), 147-80, Nos. 29, 95, 111, 118, 126, 155, 171.

⁸⁹ Ed. Ḥājiri, 46-53, tr. Pellat, 64-75.

⁹⁰ The Arabic text has here كاحار, which G. Van Vloten in his pioneer edition of the *Kitāb al-Bukhālā'*, *Le livre des avarés* (Leiden 1900), 47, read as *kākhār*. There seems to be no connection with the *Kāghān* mentioned below, whose meaning is too specialised to fit the context here. Ḥājiri vocalises *kājār*, and in his note on the word (pp. 308-9) traces it back to Turkish *kachmak* "flee, run away" (cf. Sir Gerard Clauson, *An etymological dictionary of pre-thirteenth century Turkish* [Oxford 1972], 589-90), which, he says, has gone into Persian in the verb *qachānīdan* and into Arabic to give the modern term for gypsies *ghajar*. There may or may not be a connection between Jāḥiẓ's *kājār* and modern *ghajar*, and K. Völlers, "Beiträge zur Kenntniss der lebenden arabischen Sprache in Aegypten", *ZDMG*, L (1896), 611, accepted an etymology for this last from Turkish *kachar* "wandering". But it is improbable that *kājār* at least could have come into Arabic from early Turkish, since in the mid-9th century Islamic world, Turks had only very recently appeared as military slaves of the Caliphs, and a word like this would hardly have had time to become naturalised in the contemporary Arabic.

⁹¹ Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān* (Beirut 1374-6/1955-7), V, 319, says that this is ■ river in al-Ahwāz, sc. Khūzistān, but without more exact details.

⁹² Unless this refers to the Qaṭr or Quṭr lying between Shirāz and Kirmān, in a mountain region notorious for the activities of the Qufṣ and other robbers, as was suggest-

(*mutashabbihā*) and the cut-throats of al-Jazīra. As a past master in the arts of trickery and swindling, he claims to be conversant with the tricks of the soothsayers and the ruses of the tellers of the future, the diviners by means of a study of lines in sand, the cries of birds, the markings on bones, the conjunctions of the stars, the flight of birds, the throwing-down of pebbles, and those who work by thought-transference (? : *al-fikr*).⁹³

Above all, Khālīd b. Yazīd claims to have eaten the bread of charity (*zakūri*) for thirty years, to have had under his command a series of leaders of the beggars (*ka'biyyūn*⁹⁴ and *mukaddūn*), whose grotesque names are here detailed: Ishāq Qattāl al-Ḥīr ("vulva slayer"), Banjawaih Sha'r al-Jamal ("camel's hair"), 'Amr al-Qauqil, Ja'far Kurdī Kalak (?), Qarn Airihi ("horn of his penis" = "erect penis"), Hammawaih 'Ain al-Fil ("elephant's eye"), Shahrām Ḥimār Ayyūb ("Job's Ass") and Sa'dawaih Nā'ik Ummihi ("he who copulates with his own mother").⁹⁵ Finally, he claims to have surpassed in impudence and trickery, or to have exercised command over, every sort of fraudulent beggar. These last are listed under the technical terms appropriate to each subdivision of these beggars, and as is the case with the "Story of al-Ḥārithī" further on in the *Kitāb al-Bukhalā'* (to which Jāḥiẓ appends a vocabulary explaining the names of different classes of offenders against the etiquette of eating and drinking at table, as

ed by Van Vloten, *Le livre des avarés*, Notes et éclaircissements, IX, citing *Tāj al-'arūs*, III, 499. There was also a Qaṭr in the marshlands of Lower Iraq, between Baṣra and Wāsiṭ, again an inaccessible region frequented by lawless peoples like the Zuṭṭ, see Yāqūt, *op. cit.*, IV, 372.

⁹³ Ed. Ḥājirī, 46-7, 49-50, tr. Pellat, 65-7, 70-1.

⁹⁴ Van Vloten, *op. cit.*, XI, connects this with a word surviving in Moroccan Arabic dialect with the sense "wretched, unlucky person" (H. Luderitz, "Spruchwörter aus Marokko mit Erläuterungen im Dialekt des nordlichen Marokko", *MSOS*, Westasiatische Abteilung, II [1899], 26, No. LI), and Jāḥiẓ derives it from a personal name, see below, p. 41. But the word may simply mean "gambler", "one who plays with dice or sheep's bones or datestones, *ki'āb, nawā'*", cf. the words of Abū Ḥayyān at-Tauḥidī cited below, p. 75; *al-la'b bi-l-ka'b* was regarded not merely as a children's game, but as a gambling one, forbidden by the Shari'a, see 'Abd ar-Rahmān b. Naṣr ash-Shaizari, *Nihāyat ar-ru'ba fī ṭalab al-ḥisba*, ed. al-'Arīnī (Cairo 1365/1946), 103-4, and Ibn al-Ukhuwwa, *Ma'ālim al-qurba*, 171, tr. 60. Gambling was notoriously an activity of the beggars, see Abū Dulaf, *Qaṣida sāsāniyya*, vv. 100-1.

⁹⁵ That the Persians (of whom Sa'dawaih, from his name, appears to have been one) held as licit certain liaisons with their mothers and sisters, considered by the Arabs as incestuous, was an old canard of the pro-Arabs in the Shu'ūbiyya controversies; the accusation doubtless goes back to certain Zoroastrian marriage practices.

these are expounded by al-Ḥārithī and the “judge of the beautiful people” (*qāḍī l-fityān*) Abū Fātik,⁹⁶ Jāḥiẓ subjoins an explanatory list of these otherwise mysterious terms.⁹⁷

The first one is the *M.kh.ṭ.rānī*, which Jāḥiẓ says designates the man who comes to you in the guise of an ascetic and indicates, either through a companion who speaks on his behalf or else by writing on a slate or piece of some other writing-material, that he was once a muezzin, but had been seized by Bābak (sc. the leader of the Khurramiyya rebels against the Abbasids, who held neo-Mazdakite doctrines and were strongly anti-Islamic, and who dominated Azerbaijan and neighbouring parts of Jibāl and Armenia during the caliphates of al-Ma'mūn and al-Mu'taṣim) and his tongue torn out.⁹⁸ This effect of ostensible tonguelessness was presumably achieved by somehow swallowing the tongue; Jāḥiẓ confesses that he himself was once taken in by a *m.kh.ṭ.rānī*. The term appears in Abū Dulaf's *Qaṣīda sāṣāniyya*, v. 37, in the verbal form of *makḥṭara*, glossed as “the act of swallowing one's tongue and then indicating that the Byzantines have cut it out”. Without using this specific term, Ṣafī d-Dīn also boasts that, in his guise as a shameless beggar, he has often ostensibly torn out his tongue, but has afterwards started speaking again, alleging that the Prophet has appeared to him in a dream and restored to him the power of speech (*Qaṣīda sāṣāniyya*, v. 58).

The *Kāghānī* pretends to be possessed by the *jinn*, i.e. mad, or else to be an epileptic, and foams at the mouth so realistically that one feels certain that his condition is incurable and one wonders how so severely afflicted a person manages to survive at all. In Abū Dulaf, v. 30, *kāgh* and the feminine *kāgha* are glossed as “one who pretends to be mad”, whereas in Ṣafī d-Dīn, v. 46, we have the term *nakdānī* for the person who pretends to be mentally deranged or epileptic and goes around assaulting women on this plea.

⁹⁶ Ed. Ḥājirī, 76-8, tr. 108-11.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 46, 51-3, tr. 65-6, 73-5.

⁹⁸ The job of muezzin could be a hazardous one. As the mosque official who was so clearly in the public ear, he was a natural target during any anti-Muslim outbreak, of which there were not a few during the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries in the disturbed Persian countryside. Thus in 316/928 a Dailamī condottieri, Asfār b. Shīrūya, who was not a Muslim, seized Qazwīn, forbade the performance of the Muslim worship, demolished mosques and had the muezzin of the Friday mosque there thrown down from his own minaret (Mas'ūdi, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, IX, 10-11: Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī-t-tārīkh* [Beirut 1385/1965], 192-3).

The *Bānuwānī* is the beggar who halts at a door, pulls back the bolt and cries *Bānuwā*, in Arabic, "O Master!" In Abū Dulaf, v. 59, we have a denominative verb *banwana*, applied to someone who claims affiliation to the *Bānuwāniyya*, here defined as equalling the *shuṭṭār*, bands of urban rowdies and mobsters,⁹⁹ and who also asserts that he is an escaped captive.

The *'Arsī* is the one who ties up his leg and arm with a tight bandage and leaves this overnight so that the circulation of blood to it is impeded and the limb swells up. He then rubs some soap and the bright red, resinous gum dragon's blood (*dam al-akhawain*) on it, drops a little bit of butter on to it, and covers it up with an old cloth, uncovering part of it to public view. Anyone seeing it is convinced that the beggar has a gangrenous ulcer or suchlike condition. The term *'Arsī* itself comes from Bedouin life, for *'arasa*, verbal noun *'ars*, denotes the act of tying down a camel's forelegs to its neck by means of a rope, the *'irās*, e.g. for purposes of the impregnation of the she-camel by a stallion.¹⁰⁰ Although the term *'arsī* is not used by Abū Dulaf, the trick is as old as the hills, and Abū Dulaf does not fail to note the exponents of the device of fraudulent bandages or contorted limbs, see vv. 35, 54: the specific use of dragon's blood, gum tragacanth and gum arabic to simulate the appearance of pustules on the skin was known to him also, see v. 113.

The *Musha'ib* (literally, "he who improves, makes good something")¹⁰¹ is only called thus ironically, since he is in fact a mutilator of children, who are brought to him soon after birth for him to blind

⁹⁹ Probably to be connected with the groups of vigilantes and young men organised in para-military groups (*fityān*, *aḥdāth*, *'ayyārūn*) who were a notable element in the social structure of many towns in the central and eastern Islamic lands from the 3rd/9th century till the Mongol invasions; they are discussed at length by Cl. Cahen in his *Mouvements populaires et autonomisme urbain dans l'Asie musulmane du Moyen Âge* (Leiden 1959, originally in *Arabica*, V-VI [1958-9]).

¹⁰⁰ Cf. H.R.P. Dickson, *The Arab of the desert, a glimpse into Bedouin life in Kuwait and Sa'udi Arabia*² (London 1951), 411: "The act of copulation in performed with the female in kneeling posture, her foreleg usually being tied up to the shoulder to keep her quiet". It was the merit of Schwally in his translation of the section on the various types of beggar in Baihaqī's *Kitāb al-Maḥāsīn wa-l-masāwī*, where this information is later reproduced (see below, p. 41), to establish the correct reading *al-'arsī* (ZA, XXVII [1912], 38) instead of the meaningless *al-q.r.sī* or *al-q.r.shī* of the texts of the *Kitāb al-Bukhalā'*.

¹⁰¹ Thus forms I and II of *sha'aba*, see Lane, *Lexicon*, s.v.

them or to make their limbs contorted (*a'sam*, or following the variant *a'sham*, "withered, as of a tree") or to make one arm shorter than the other. Often it is the parents who bring the children along, paying a substantial sum to the *Musha'ib*, so that these pitiful objects can be a source of revenue for them when they beg. They may hire out such a child to someone who may take him immense distances, such as to the Maghrib, begging along the road thither; if the bona fides of the beggar taking the child is not certain, a bond of surety (*kafāla*) for the child's safe return is exacted from the beggar beforehand. A lineal descendant of this *Musha'ib* is the figure of Zaiṭa in Nagīb Maḥfūz's *Zuqāq al-Midaqq* (set in Cairo of the early nineteen-forties), the sadistic deformer of beggars' limbs, the operation being undertaken by them in order to render themselves piteous objects of charity; Zaiṭa then goes round the circle of beggars in his quarter every night exacting from each of them his due of two milliemes from the day's takings. Zaiṭa also relates, in telling his life story to the baker's wife Ḥusniyya, that his parents were both professional beggars, and that they used to hire a baby to carry with them on their rounds until the blessed event of Zaiṭa's own birth.¹⁰²

The *Filaur* is a trickster of the same variety as the *'Arsī*, i.e. a self-mutilator. He does something to his testes to simulate a hernia there, or he may display there a cancerous growth, an ulcer or a tumour. He may display something similar in his anus, this effect being achieved by stuffing into it part of an animal's windpipe with some of the lung membranes; women do likewise with their vaginas. The trick is somewhat reminiscent of Abū Dulaf's *mudashshish* (v. 53), who simulates an anal discharge. The etymology of *Filaur* was noted by Van Vloten, that it must be from Persian *pīla-var* "seller, peddler of drugs";¹⁰³ Jawālīqī has the singular *failūr*, pl. *falāwira* = *ṣayādila* "druggists".¹⁰⁴

The *Kāghān* (not obviously connected with the *Kāghānī* mentioned above, at least from the semantic aspect; Schwally read it as *kākhān*)¹⁰⁵ is a pretty boy who makes a living as a male prostitute, acting as

¹⁰² *Zuqāq al-Midaqq*, chs. VII, XVI.

¹⁰³ *Le livre des avarès*, Notes et éclaircissements, XI.

¹⁰⁴ *al-Mu'arrab min al-kalām al-'ajamī 'alā ḥurūf al-mu'jam*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir (Cairo 1361/1942), 248.

¹⁰⁵ Baihaqī, *Kitāb al-Maḥāsin wa-l-masāwī* (Giessen 1900-2), 626.

either the active or passive partner in sodomy (*'amīla l-'amalain*).¹⁰⁶ That pederasty was a practice of certain beggars (and also amongst certain dervishes who made a parade of antinomianism, see below, p. 114) is attested by Abū Dulaf, v. 25, where he boasts that the beggars' brotherhoods include both heterosexuals and homosexuals, and in vv. 115-20, where he speaks of homosexual assaults by beggar chiefs on boys in their bands; Ṣafī d-Dīn likewise, speaking as a beggar, urges on his readers the pleasures of copulating with beardless boys (v. 11).

The *'Awwā* (literally, "he who keeps on howling or crying like a dog or jackal") denotes the beggar who goes round from door to door, possibly singing or chanting if he has an agreeable voice, between the times of the sunset and the evening prayers, i.e. at the time when people are preparing their evening meal and when he can accordingly be sure of getting some scraps of food. He is therefore the exact equivalent of Abū Dulaf's *musta'shī* (v. 55).

The *Iṣṭīl* is another beggar with a feigned disability, this time in the eyes; he can show either that he has had his eyes put out, or else is suffering from some complaint of the eyes like cataract (literally, "water"), ophthalmia or pannus (*rīḥ as-sabal*), which has impaired or destroyed his sight. The term *iṣṭīl* is of uncertain etymology, but must have been well-known at the time; Abū Dulaf (v. 102) and Ṣafī d-Dīn (v. 57) use it as a simple synonym for "blind", and in Abū Dulaf, vv. 51, 137, we have the verb *saṭṭala* "he blinded [someone]" (transitive) or "he pretended to be blind" (intransitive).

The *Mazīdī* ("he who asks for more", *mazīd*) uses a few miserable fragments of coins as a bait for prospective donors, asking them to add a little more so that he may buy for himself a fringed robe (*qaṭīfa*, used either as clothing or for a sleeping coverlet) or the shroud which every Muslim is anxious to have ready for himself at the point of

¹⁰⁶ The root *'amīla* is an obvious one for euphemistic usage. W. Marçais noted that *'amīl* is common all over North Africa for "coitus", and that the root is also used in regard to unnatural vice, as in Jāḥiẓ's text: *ya'mālha* "he does it" = acts as passive partner, and *ya'mālha m-eṣṣirtēn* "he does it from both sides" = acts both actively and passively. See his "Nouvelles observations sur l'euphémisme dans les parlers arabes maghribins", *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves*, XIII (Brussels 1953) (= *Mélanges Isidore Levy*), 341-2, 364. Ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī uses for "male prostitute" the terms *al-muktasib bi-l-ijāra* "he who gains a living by hiring himself out" and *mu'ājar* "he who is hired out", as in the phrase *mu'ājar dirhamain* (*Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*, II, 145, 149).

death.¹⁰⁷ Often the *Mazīdī* has with him a child, alleging that the child is a foundling whom he has taken under his wing.¹⁰⁸

The *Musta'rid* ("he who accosts you", or perhaps "he who seeks a gift, 'urāḍa") might be described as one of the distressed gentlefolk. He is decently dressed and has a respectable air, "as if he were dying of shame, and mortally afraid lest some acquaintance see him". He sidles up to you, as if encountering you by chance, and then asks for money in a low voice. In Abū Dulaf, v. 67, the *musta'riḍūn*, beggars who come to you copiously weeping and lamenting their wretched state, are described as "the princes (variant, "most skilful") of the beggars".

The *Muqaddis* ("he who greets you with benedictions and pious wishes") stands over a corpse and begs money for the dead man's shroud; he may also stand over a dead donkey or camel on the pilgrimage route to Mecca, claiming that the beast has died under him, and that unless he gets money, he will be unable to fulfil his aim. He possesses some of the skills of the *ḥākiya* or mimic (see above, p. 20), in that he has learnt the language of the Khurāsānīs, the Yemenīs and the North Africans, and knows all about the people and towns there, even down to the actual streets; hence he can claim kinship with pilgrims coming from all quarters of the Islamic world and can pose with equal success as a North African, a Farghānan or a Yemenī. In Abū Dulaf, v. 43, the verb *qaddasa* has a different technical sense, and describes the activities of the beggars who fraudulently claim to be fasting during Ramaḍān.

The *Mukaddī* is simply defined here as one who begs (*ṣāhib al-kidā'*). It is presumably from Persian *gadā* "begging", and must have been still unfamiliar enough in Jāḥiẓ's time for him to have to define it.

The *Ka'bī* is a term used by Khālid b. Yazīd for a member of a

¹⁰⁷ Burial in a shroud (*kafan*) is regarded as a *farḍ*, legal necessity, especially as it is held that it is in these clothes that the resurrected Muslim will appear before God. See H. Granqvist, *Muslim death and burial, Arab customs and traditions studied in a village in Jordan* (Helsinki 1965), 58 ff.

¹⁰⁸ The rescuing and sheltering of the *laqīṭ* or foundling was a meritorious act, and is considered by Islamic law as a *farḍ kifāya*, an obligation on the Muslim community as a whole, and as a *farḍ 'ain*, obligation on the individual once he accepts responsibility for the foundling, Islamic law does, in fact, regulate the status of the *laqīṭ* with considerable care, see C. Hamilton, *The Hedāya or guide, a commentary on the Mussulman laws* (London 1791), II, 257-63; E. Sachau, *Muhammedanische Recht nach schafitischen Lehre* (Stuttgart and Berlin 1897), 661-6; and D. Santillana, *Istituzioni di diritto musulmano malichita, con riguardo anche al sistema sciafiita* (Rome 1926), I, 306-7.

sub-group or associated group of beggars connected with his own activities, see above, p. 35; Jāḥiẓ merely derives it from the name of the beggar chief, Ubayy b. Ka'b al Mausilī, who led the beggars, a year after Khālid himself had been leader, around a certain spring of water.

The *Zakūrī* is bread given as alms to prisoners or beggars. It must be related to the verb *zakkara* and the noun *az-zakūriyyūn* of Abū Dulaf, v. 78, *zakkara* being glossed as "he begged from door to door, these beggars being considered amongst the most prestigious".

Jāḥiẓ concludes his list by saying that he has only explained those words actually mentioned by Khālid b. Yazīd; the types of beggar amount to several times more than these, but to retail the whole list would be outside the purpose of his book.

Some two generations later, Jāḥiẓ's information was utilised, but with additional classes of rogues named and explained, in the *Kitāb al-Maḥāsin wa-l-masāwīr* of Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Baihaqī, about whom little is known beyond the fact that he belonged to the circle of Ibn al-Mu'tazz and wrote during the caliphate of al-Muqtadir (295-320/908-32).¹⁰⁹ The book deals with the good and advantageous aspects of certain classes of person or qualities or events, and the bad and disadvantageous aspects of others, all from the point of view of an *adīb*, with much citation of poetry, especially from the post-classical period near to the author's own time, sc. the later 3rd/9th century and the early 4th 10th century, and with many snippets of literary, social and historical information which would attract the attention of the Muslim reader. The apocryphal work of Jāḥiẓ bearing a similar title, the *Kitāb al-Maḥāsin wa-l-aḍḍād wa-l-'ajā'ib wa-l-gharā'ib* (edited by Van Vloten as *Le livre des beautés et des antithèses*, Leiden 1897, and translated by O. Rescher, Stuttgart-Istanbul 1922-6), seems to combine original material from Jāḥiẓ with excerpts from Baihaqī's own book.¹¹⁰ Friedrich Schwally edited the substantial text of Baihaqī's work from the two surviving manuscripts (Giessen 1900-2), but as Rescher remarked just after Schwally had died, a delayed victim of the First World War privations, Schwally's edition did not excite the interest which both the intrinsic value of the subject-matter and the carefulness with which it was edited, really warranted.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ The article on him in *EI*² (by C. Brockelmann) is extremely brief.

¹¹⁰ See Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 246-7, 249, and Pellat, "Ġāḥiẓiana III. Essai d'inventaire de l'œuvre ḡāḥiẓienne", 165.

¹¹¹ Rescher, *Index und Stellenmachweise zu Fr. Schwally's Baihaqī-Ausgabe* (Stuttgart 1923), Vorwort.

There is in the *Kitāb al-Maḥāsin wa-l-masāwī* significant material on rogues, beggars and similar tricksters. Thus in a section on the bad effects of error and poor judgement, Baihaqī cites an anecdote in which the narrator Thumāma¹¹² condemns the credulousness of the masses of people. Thumāma states that he saw a quack doctor selling a medicine which would allegedly cure every possible condition of the eye, when one of the quack's own eyes was blind and the other obviously paining him; nevertheless, this in no way affected his credibility in the eyes of his customers, thanks to the peddler's facile tongue and convincing explanations of this seeming paradox.¹¹³ Especially relevant for our purposes, however, is that section of the book entitled "The good aspects of beggars".¹¹⁴ It opens with an old and experienced beggar delivering a hymn of praise on the merits of begging as a profession: that beggars are free to roam the world, are untrammelled by worldly possessions, and can always be sure of some sustenance, wherever they may find themselves. He illustrates this last fact by describing how once in Jibāl, he collected a crowd round him in the mosque, and in an impassioned speech, claimed to be a famous warrior for the faith from Maṣṣīṣa in Cilicia, and to have fought in the campaigns against Byzantium alongside such heroic figures as the Amīr of Malatya 'Amr b. 'Ubaidallāh al-Aqṭa' as-Sulamī and 'Abdallāh al-Baṭṭāl b. al-Ḥusain; now, having been despoiled by brigands, he was pleading for assistance. So moving was the peroration of his speech that dirhams were rained on him by the audience, and he got away with over 100 dirhams.¹¹⁵ The *ghāzī* from the Byzantine frontiers, who collects money either for his own return to the fray, or on the pretext that he is a refugee who has lost everything to the advancing Greeks, is a familiar enough figure in Abū Dulaf (vv. 37, 44-5) and Ṣafī d-Dīn (v. 53); and it is not difficult to see in this beggar, who styles himself to his credulous audience "Ibn al-Ghuzayyil b. ar-Rakkān

¹¹² So. Abū Bishr Thumāma b. al-Ashras, Mu'tazilī theologian and pupil of Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir, and courtier of Hārūn ar-Rashīd and al-Ma'mun, d. 213/828; see Aḥmad b. 'Alī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rikh Baghdād* (Cairo 1349/1930-1), VII, 145-8, and A.S. Tritton, *Muslim theology* (London 1947), 98-100.

¹¹³ *Kitāb al-Maḥāsin wa-l-masāwī*, 151-2.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 622-32.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 622-4. The passage is translated, in slightly abridged form (the authority for the anecdote is Jāḥiẓ), in Pellat, *The life and works of Jāḥiẓ, translations of selected texts*, 255-6, but note the misleading translation of *al-ghuzāt wa-l-murābiṭūn* as "conquerors and monks", perhaps explicable by the process of translation from French to English.

al-Maṣṣīṣī", the forerunner of the heroes of the *maqāmāt*, Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Iskandari and Abū Zaid as-Sarūjī.

This same section on beggars in the *Kitāb al-Maḥāsin wa-l-masāwī* contains some pages of *nawādir*, amusing anecdotes, of no great sociological interest, but the really interesting part is that on "the various types of beggar and their activities" (pp. 624-7). In this, Baihaqī repeats some of the information given by Jāḥiẓ in the story of Khālīd b. Yazīd and detailed above (sc. on the *Kāghānī*, the 'Arsī, the *Musha'ib*, the *Filaur*, the *Kāghān/Kākhān*, the 'Awwā', the *Iṣṭīl*, the *Mazīdī* the *Musta'rid*), usually in a somewhat more abbreviated form; but Baihaqī further describes here several varieties of beggar not mentioned by Jāḥiẓ. The whole of this section from Baihaqī was translated, with amplifications where required from the text of the *Kitāb al-Bukhalā'* and with a valuable commentary, by Schwally in his article "Ein arabisches Liber Vagatorum".¹¹⁶ The new types of beggar described by Baihaqī are given below; the ultimate source of his material here is unknown.

The first of these additional types of beggar is the *Makkī* (etymology uncertain; there is no discernible connection with the town of Mecca), who uses the old device of the man who has been allegedly robbed and is therefore stranded far from home, rather like the pseudo-*ghāzī* Ibn al-Ghuzayyīl mentioned above. He wears wide trousers of Dabīqī or Narsī cloth (i.e. of high-quality Egyptian or Iraqi material), and has Armenian silk trouser-cords (i.e. again of the best available quality) fastened round his neck. When he is in the mosque, he claims to be the son of a wealthy Cairo merchant, sent by his father to distant Merv in Khurasan with 10,000 dirhams' worth of goods; but now, so he says, he has been despoiled of all this and has been left stripped to his trousers. Being unfitted to pursue any craft, he has been compelled to beg.

The *Saḥarī* ("he who comes at the *saḥar*, i.e. just before dawn") comes very early each morning to the mosque, before even the call to the dawn prayer, in order to ply his trade.

The *Shajawī* ("he who is a state of wretchedness, *shajw'*") passes as a person who has been incarcerated for fifty years in a subterranean dungeon (*mutbaq*) and has been one of the Khuldiyya, those condemned to perpetual imprisonment (*mukhallad*).¹¹⁷ In order to give credence

¹¹⁶ ZA, XXVII (1912), 28-42.

¹¹⁷ Probably to be equated with the Khulaidiyya "those condemned to perpetual

to this imposture, he makes the marks of chains and fetters on his right hand and his legs, and goes round plaiting trouser cords.¹¹⁸

The *Dharārīḥ* ("he who smears himself with cantharides or spanish fly, *dhurrāḥ* pl. *dharārīḥ*, *dharārīḥ*") uses dyestuffs and medicaments to create the impression of a dreadful wound, somewhat like the 'Arsī. He smears part of his body with this cantharides and binds the place up with a bandage, leaving it thus overnight. He goes out next morning naked, the treated patch of skin having come out in blisters and yellow pustules. He may also rub on his back some ash, in order to simulate the appearance of having been burnt.¹¹⁹ Abū Dulaf's beggars also smeared themselves with ashes and soot, but in this instance, with the aim of showing how they had spent the night in the stokeholds of baths, sheltering in these cosy places from the cold (vv. 56, 136). That down-and-outs did frequent these places for warmth is known from such citations as Abū Dulaf, vv. 159-60, commentary, and Ṣafī d-Dīn's mention of "the frequenters of the furnace of the bathhouses", v. 66; for evidence from Elizabethan England, see below, p. 122 n. 74. The practice was, indeed, the mediaeval Islamic equivalent of clochards sleeping above the grills sending up hot air from the Paris Metro.

The *Ḥājūr* also is known to Abū Dulaf, under that very name, but the exact nature of the trick involved is different. Baihaqī's *Ḥājūr* does more or less the same as the *Fīlaur*, i.e. he takes a piece of an animal's windpipe, together with the membrane of the lungs, and inserts the windpipe part into his anus in order to simulate the effect of haemorrhoids, whilst he spreads the part of the lung over his thigh, sprinkling it with dragon's blood. On the other hand, Abū Dulaf's

imprisonment" (?), mentioned as a group of beggars or brigands in the Story of Khālīd b. Yazīd, *Kitāb al-Bukhalāʾ*, ed. Ḥājirī, 50, tr. 70, and linked with the Katifiyya/Kutai-fiyya, perhaps those chained up by their shoulders (*aktāf*) or in irons (*katāʾif*), cf. Van Vloten, *Le livre des avarès*, Notes et éclaircissements, X.

¹¹⁸ Schwally notes ("Ein arabische Liber Vagatorum", 33, n. 3) that the weaving or plaiting of trouser cords (*tikak*, sing. *tikka*) seems to have been an activity of prisoners, quoting a verse by Ibn al-Muʿtazz which occurs elsewhere in the *Kitāb al-Maḥāsīn wa-l-masāwī*, 571, "I have learnt to weave trouser cords in prison, whereas I had been a prince before I was jailed".

¹¹⁹ The Arabic pharmacologists do not speak of cantharides as having an ulcerative and corrosive effect when applied externally, but Ibn al-Baitār and the authorities quoted by him in his long article on *dharārīḥ* speak of the violent effect of the drug on the uro-genital system when taken internally, see *Traité des simples*, tr. L. Leclerc, Part 2, in *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale et autres bibliothèques*, XXV (1881), 144-6, No. 995.

Ḥājūr pierces an egg and secretly clasps it into his bosom (*hajr*, *hijr*), so that the yoke oozes out through his clothing and gives the appearance of a suppurating wound (v. 35).

The *Khāqānī* does things to his face to make it look like *Khāqān*, the monarch of the Turks: he blackens it with aloes gum and with ink, so that people think that it is swollen up.¹²⁰

The *Zukaīm al-Mughālaṭa* (? "the *Zukaīm* of those led into error") feigns dumbness and indicates to you his inability to speak. The meaning of *Zukaīm*/*Zakīm* is unclear, unless it is to be connected with *zakma* "offspring, progeny".¹²¹

The *Kān* is the person who makes an agreement beforehand with a popular storyteller and preacher of edifying stories, *qāṣṣ*, to hand over half or a third of what he has collected whilst the *qāṣṣ* is speaking.¹²² As we have seen above, pp. 26-9, the *qāṣṣ*, from being a figure of comparatively high standing in the earliest Islamic period, with a role in the instruction of the many new Muslims in the rudiments of the faith, later sank in the social and intellectual scale and became eventually lumped with other charlatans and rogues preying upon the credulity of the faithful. *Khālīd b. Yazīd* claims to have spent part of his chequered career as a *qāṣṣ* (above, p. 34), and *Abū Dulaf* includes amongst his tricksters the *qāṣṣ* who tells brief and easily-digested stories about the Jewish and other prophets (v. 41). But the exact equivalent to *Baihaqī's Kān* in *Abū Dulaf's* poem is the latter's *Mukawwiz*, who takes up a place in the circle round the *qāṣṣ*, and the latter tells his audience to give something to the *Mukawwiz*; they then share out the takings afterwards (v. 32).

The *Mufalfil* ("he who strews pepper, *fulful*, about", or as we would

¹²⁰ It is puzzling why a darkened, swollen face should be considered as characteristic of the *Khāqān* or *Kaghan* of the Turks, since Muslim writers usually impute to the Turkish race fair hair and colouring rather than dark ones. One wonders whether *Khāqānī* does not in fact have here its well-attested connotation of "catamite", see Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, I, 346. The term must have arisen from the fact that with the influx of Turkish military slaves or *ghulāms* into the caliphate from the 3rd/9th century onwards, Turkish slave boys became the catamites *par excellence*, cf. the anecdote about the Turkish *ghulām* and *Ibn Simjūr* in *ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī*, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*, II, 160.

¹²¹ See also *Lisān al-'arabī*, XV, 161, and *Tāj al-'arūs*, VIII, 326: *zakamat bihi ummuhu* "his mother gave birth to him", and *zūkma* "the last child born to parents".

¹²² Schwally plausibly suggested an etymological connection with Syriac *kān* "upright, just", the term being used, like *musha'ib*, ironically ("Ein arabisches Liber Vagatorum", 35 n. 5).

say, "pulls wool over people's eyes") is the name given to each of a pair of rogues who work together. When they enter a town, they make for the finest mosque there, and by engaging in a noisy dialogue during the worship, draw attention to themselves. With the audience now alert, they explain that they are merchants who were taking a consignment of cotton goods from Fustāt in Egypt to Iraq, but have been attacked and robbed. Now, being unfamiliar with the profession of begging, they have come near to death rather than shame themselves by mendicacy.

The *Zukaim al-Ḥabasha* ("the *Zukaim* of the Ethiopians") is that perennial figure, the self-styled warrior for the faith just back from the frontiers and appealing for funds; he wears the characteristic dress of the *ghāzī*, sc. a quilted woollen robe or *durrā'a*, slit at the front and back, no trousers and military-style boots (*khuff thaghri*).¹²³

The *Zukaim al-Marḥūma al-Makāfif* (? "the *Zukaim* of the pitiable, blind ones")¹²⁴ is one of a group of five or six or so blind men who have banded together under the leadership of one who can just see dimly or who can see at night-time only — this leader being called the *Iṣṭīl* (see above, p. 39). The leader raises his voice in begging, and the rest of them echo his words.

The *Muṭayyin* ("he who smears himself with clay, *ṭīn*") smears his body from head to foot with clay, and holds anacardium nuts (in his hand or mouth?) indicating that he is about to eat them.¹²⁵ The aim

¹²³ The white, woollen *durrā'a* is mentioned as being worn by the Caliph al-Mu'taṣim for his celebrated campaign against Amorium in Anatolia in 223/838, together with the *'imāmat al-ghuzāt*, the special turban of the *ghāzīs* (Mas'ūdī, *Murūj adh-dhahab*, VIII, 134-5) Concerning special headgear, Hārūn ar-Rashid wore a high cap or *qalansūwa*, on which were written the words *ghāzī*, *ḥājj* when he marched against Heraclia or Eregli in 190/806 (Ṭabari, *Ta'rikh*, III, 709-10).

¹²⁴ Following here Rescher's suggestion that *al-Makāfif* belongs with *al-Marḥūma*, see his "Bemerkungen zur arabischen Philologie. 7. Zu Schwally's Baihaqī-Ausgabe", *ZS*, III, (1924), 88.

¹²⁵ The anacardium nut (Arabic *anaqardiyyā* < Greek ἀνακάρδιον, or *balādhur* < Sanskrit *bhallātaka*), fruit of the marking-nut tree, *Anacardium officinale*, native to India and South-East Asia; see B. Laufer, *Sino-Iranica, Chinese contributions to the history of civilization in ancient Iran, with special reference to the history of cultivated plants and products*, Field Museum of Natural History, Publication No. 201, Anthropological Series, XV, No. 3 (Chicago 1919), 482-3, 582, and A. Siggel, *Arabisch-deutsches Wörterbuch der Stoffe aus den drei Naturreichen*, Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, Institut für Orient-forschung, Veröffentlichung Nr. 1 (Berlin 1950), 21. The kernels of the nut are supposed to stimulate the mental powers and memory, but mediaeval Islamic pharmacologists regarded the *balādhur* nut as a dangerous poison, and the grand-

here is presumably to give an effect of madness, as is the case also with the *Muṭayyin* of Abū Dulaf, v. 59, who smears his face and arms with red clay, i.e. red ochre, and stands up in the market place spouting poetry.

father of the historian Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī is said to have died from inadvertent over-indulgence. See Ibn al-Baiṭar, *op. cit.*, Part 1, in *Notices et extraits*, XXIII (1877), 162, 265-6, Nos. 179, 379.

CHAPTER TWO

ABŪ DULAF AL-KHAZRAJĪ, HIS LIFE AND WORKS

I

Abū Dulaf Mis'ar b. Muhalhil al-Yanbū'ī al-Khazrajī is a curious figure who flits across the stage of the 4th/10th century Islamic world at various junctures, yet never comes into very sharp focus. Thus neither the date of his birth nor of his death is known, even approximately. We have only intermittent information about the main stages of his career; we merely meet him at certain, apparently disconnected, points of time, when he pops up at the court of some welcoming ruler or minister and makes a place for himself in the circle of a wealthy patron there. The strongly Bedouin character of his personal names, and his *nisbas* relating to the Medinan group of clans, the Khazraj, and the Ḥijāzī port of Yanbu',¹ indicate a West Arabian origin for Abū Dulaf's family, but whether he was himself a native of the peninsula is quite unknown. In the closing lines of his *Qaṣīda sāṣāniyya*, he speaks with evident *Heimweh* of his desire to finish his roamings over the face of the earth and to settle down in his homeland (vv. 188-9). Unfortunately, this homeland is not precisely named, although he has in the preceeding lines been dwelling with approbation upon the land of Iraq as the last resting-place of so many holy men and martyrs of the Alids (vv. 181-5).

It is clear that Abū Dulaf was a man with a restless, questing temperament, avid for the witnessing of marvels and for the testing of new experiences, in Miquel's words, "un héros de roman". Ibn an-Nadīm, who worked in Baghdad and who speaks of Abū Dulaf as if he knew him personally (*qāla lī Abū Dulaf ...*), says in his *Fihrist* (completed in 377/987-8) that Abū Dulaf was a globetrotter (*jawwāla*),² and Abū Dulaf says himself in the closing lines of his *Qaṣīda sāṣāniyya* again,

¹ Somewhat curiously, this *nisba* always appears in the sources with a long *ū*, sc. as Yanbū'ī.

² Ed. Flügel, I, 346-7, tr. Dodge, II, 829-30.

Indeed, have I not milked fortune, one pair of teats after another ?
 And I have wandered through the earth till my circumambulations have made
 me like al-Khiḍr (vv. 175-6)

Undoubtedly, Abū Dulaf had an ample fund of personal experience for writing about the wandering life of the Banū Sāsān and other *fahrende Leute* of his age. However, he spoilt his potentiality for setting forth in the most effective possible manner to contemporary audiences his breadth of knowledge about the characters of the Islamic underworld and about the geography and lore of remote parts of Asia, by this extravagant talk on occasions, resulting in a straining of people's credulity. He himself in one place felt impelled to protest about the reputation imputed to him. In his second *Risāla* (on which see below), he describes the monster *rībās* or currant-fruited rhubarb plants³ of the Nishapur district as yielding stalks weighing up to 50 *mans*, and he comments that although his listeners might consider this an exaggeration, he only sets down what he has personally witnessed.⁴

Apart from his poetry, the chief works of Abū Dulaf known to us are his two *Risālas* or epistles. In the first of these, he purports to describe his travels from the Sāmānid capital of Bukhara in Transoxania through the land of the Turks to the borders of China and back through South-East Asia and India. This became early known to western orientalisks through the fact that a virtually complete text was obtainable from Yāqūt's geographical dictionary, the *Mu'jam al-buldān*, in the article "aṣ-Ṣīn",⁵ and also in part from Qazwīnī's '*Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt*'⁶ and his *Āthār al-bilād*,⁷ three texts which F. Wüstenfeld edited during the middle decades of the 19th century. The discovery by Zeki Velidi Togan of an independent manuscript of Abū Dulaf's two *Risālas*, part of a *majmū'a* of geographical works, in the library of the shrine of the Imām 'Alī ar-Riḍā at Mashhad, has put the investigation of both works on a firmer footing.

³ I.e. *Rheum ribes*, also called in Arabic (from the Syriac name) *yaghmiṣā*, see Ibn al-Baiṭar, tr. Part 2, 190, No. 1072, in *Notices et extraits*, XXV (1881), Part 3, 428, No. 2316, in *ibid.*, XXVI (1883), and Siggel, *Wörterbuch*, 74.

⁴ V. Minorsky, *Abū-Dulaf Miṣ'ar ibn Muḥallil's travels in Iran (circa A.D. 950)* (Cairo 1955), § 60, tr. 59-60.

⁵ Ed. Wüstenfeld (Leipzig 1866-73), III, 445-58, ed. Beirut (1374-6/1955-7), III, 440-8.

⁶ Earlier translated by Wüstenfeld, hence omitted from his edition, *Kosmographie*. I. *Die Wunder der Schöpfung* (Göttingen 1849).

⁷ Ed. Wüstenfeld in *ibid.*, II. *Die Denkmäler der Länder* (Göttingen 1848).

The first *Risāla* has thus been subjected to well over a century's analysis. Its supreme interest lies in the fact that, if it could be accepted as a reliable account, it would provide unique, apparently first-hand, information on such Turkish tribes of Inner Asia as the Yaghma, Pechenegs, Chigil, Kimek, Oghuz, Toghuz-Oghuz, Kirghiz, Qarluq, etc., at a time when the Islamic faith was only just beginning to penetrate into the steppelands and forests of Siberia. The *Risāla* claims to be based on Abū Dulaf's own experiences. Shortly before the death of the Sāmānid Amīr Naṣr b. Aḥmad (301-31/914-43), an embassy arrived in Bukhara from "the ruler of China Qālīn b. ash-Shakhīr" seeking a marriage alliance with the Muslim potentate. Naṣr b. Aḥmad agreed to let one of his sons marry Qālīn's daughter, and an embassy departed to bring back the princess from her father's capital of Sandābil. Marquart plausibly identified this place with Kan-chu in the province of Kan-su to the northwest of China proper, which was the capital not of the Chinese but of the strongly sinicised Turkish Western Uighurs; he further surmised that the Uighur Qaghan may have sought an alliance with the Sāmānids because of pressure from the K'i-tan or Liao, the people that was to appear on the stage of Islamic history in Transoxania two centuries later as the Qara-Khitai.⁸ The putative Uighur princess eventually became the mother of the Sāmānid Amīr 'Abd al-Malik b. Nūḥ b. Naṣr (343-50/945-61).

Abū Dulaf, though not apparently an official member of the Sāmānid embassy, nevertheless accompanied it to Sandābil, stayed on there after it had returned to Transoxania, and then left to continue his own journeyings, the account of which he put into his epistle. Unfortunately, it is not possible to construct an exact itinerary from his narrative, which zigzags erratically across the face of Central Asia.⁹ Minorsky reminded us that Abū Dulaf, from his residence at Bukhara, was probably aware of the geographical work of the Sāmānid Vizier

■ "Das Itinerar des Mis'ar b. al Muhallil nach der chinesische Hauptstadt", in *Osteuropäische und ostasiatische Streifzüge* (Leipzig 1903, repr. Hildesheim 1961), 84-90; see also W. Barthold, *EI*¹ art. "Kansu". Minorsky subsequently raised the question whether Sandābil was not rather the neighbouring town of Shan-tan, see his *Abū-Dulaf Mis'ar ibn Muhallil's travels in Iran*, Addenda, 123; but the turcologist and sinologist James Hamilton has once more identified Sandābil with Chang-yi, the principal town of Kan-chu, see his "Autour du manuscrit Staël-Holstein", *TP*, XLVI (1958), 129, 137.

■ A laudable attempt to make sense out of Abb Dulaf's obfuscations was made by A. von Rohr-Sauer in his *Des Abū Dulaf bericht über seine Reise nach Turkestan, China und Indien neu übersetzt und untersucht* (Stuttgart 1939), 45 ff.

Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Jaihānī, whose work is now lost but which was extensively used by later writers on Central Asia, such as the anonymous Gūzgānī author of the *Hudūd al-'ālam*, the Ghaznavid historian Gardīzī and the Seljuq physician Sharaf ad-Dīn Ṭāhir Marvazī. Hence Abū Dulaf could conceivably have derived information on the Central Asian Turks from Jaihānī's work and woven it into his own experiences.¹⁰ The patron or patrons for whom Abū Dulaf wrote his two epistles is unknown, but it seems probable that the works date from the 940s or 950s.¹¹

The first *Risāla* thus has the air of being rather a tall traveller's tale, and this is how Abū Dulaf's work struck some contemporaries and also later writers. The unknown editor of his second *Risāla* interpolates at three points in Abū Dulaf's narrative his own comments that certain items of information are "unnecessary additions" (*ziyādāt*), "imaginary fancies" (*wahm*) and "trifles" (*hanāt*) (§§ 5, 33, 49). Yāqūt, at the end of a long quotation concerning Shīz in Azerbaijan and the celebrated Zoroastrian fire-temple which survived there into early Islamic times, states defensively, "All this is taken from Abū Dulaf Miṣ'ar b. al-Muhalhil the poet, and I am free from responsibility for its truth, for wild tales and lies used to be related from him; I have only transcribed this material as I found it, and God alone is all-knowing!"¹²

In fact, the second *Risāla*, which deals with Abū Dulaf's travels within Persia, is a much more logically-constructed and credible piece of work, within which a recognisable itinerary can be traced, as was done by Minorsky in the introduction to his edition and translation, *op. cit.*, 21-3.¹³ Until Minorsky's work on this text, the second *Risāla* had attracted far less attention from orientalists and historical geogra-

¹⁰ Minorsky, *Sharaf al-Zamān Ṭāhir Marvazī on China, the Turks and India* (London 1942), 7-8; *idem*, *Abū-Dulaf Miṣ'ar ibn Muhalhil's travels in Iran*, 14. André Miquel has pointed out recently that Abū Dulaf could hardly have known the Vizier Jaihānī personally, the latter being dead at this time; he might, however, have known the son Abū 'Alī Jaihānī (d. 330/941-2) in person, see his *La géographie humaine du monde musulman jusqu'au milieu du XI^e siècle: géographie et géographie humaine dans la littérature arabe (des origines à 1050)* (Paris-The Hague 1967), 139 n. 2.

¹¹ The question of Abū Dulaf's patrons here was discussed by Minorsky, *op. cit.*, 25-6, see also Miquel, *op. cit.*, 143.

¹² *Mu'jam al-buldān*, ed. Wüstenfeld, III, 356, ed. Beirut, III, 384.

¹³ Further improvements to Minorsky's Arabic text and his evaluation of the information in it have been made by P.G. Bulgakov and A.B. Khalidov in their new text and Russian translation (which also includes a facsimile of the Mashhad manuscript), *Vtoraya zapiska Abū Dulafa* (Moscow 1960).

phers than the first one, for the connected text became available only with Togan's Mashhad discovery; as with regard to the first *Risāla*, Yāqūt and then Qazwīnī had quoted it extensively, but in short passages under individual place-name headings, rather than in extended sections. Within this epistle, Abū Dulaf shows some of his characteristic personal interests. He was intrigued by antiquities and monuments of the pre-Islamic past, hence his mention of fire-temples at Shīz (§ 5), on the mountain of Ṭabarak above Ray (§ 48) and on the plain in Khūzistān between Daurak and Rām-Hurmuz (§ 66), and also of "Ādī buildings" (i.e. large, pre-Islamic structures) in the Great Desert between Qum and Ray (§ 47) and in Rām-Hurmuz (§ 66).

He also possessed a considerable scientific curiosity, above all in the fields of mineralogy and pharmacology, the latter interest according with his activity as a practising physician. He relates, "After I had mastered the noble art and profitable commerce of sublimating, distilling, dissolving and calcifying, curiosity in regard to minerals seized my mind, and perplexity about medicinal plants, so my judgement of necessity propelled me towards veins of ore and springs ..." (§ 3). He then goes on, for instance, to discuss the minerals from the mines of Jibāl, including the three different kinds of gold obtainable from them (§ 4). It seems that Abū Dulaf was the first Arabic author to describe the oil wells of Baku, already commercially exploited on leases at the high figure of 1,000 dirhams a day (§ 13). His practical interest in the evaluation of natural phenomena is shown by the fact that he climbed half-way up Mount Demavend "with great pain and danger to myself" to confirm for his own satisfaction that the smoke rising from this volcanic mountain came from natural causes, and not because King Solomon had imprisoned there a rebellious demon or because the legendary Persian King Afrīdhūn had incarcerated Bivarāsb there (§ 51); the existence of this certain sceptical vein in Abū Dulaf should be noted as a corrective to his oft-manifested love of wonders. Indeed, Abū Dulaf has a definite place, even if this is not an outstanding one, in the development of Arabic geographical writing, and this role of his has recently been exhaustively discussed by Miquel.¹⁴

Abū Dulaf enjoyed some contemporary fame as a physician, although his efforts were not always appreciated, and one of his patients at least, Abū l-Faḍl b. al-'Amīd, thought the treatment worse than the disease itself (see below, pp. 58-9). His medical concerns do, however,

¹⁴ *La géographie humaine du monde musulman*, 139-45.

explain his keen interest in herbs and other *materia medica*, such as in the lavender and wormwood of Armenia, which he nevertheless placed below the *turkī* variety in efficaciousness as a vermifuge (§ 19), and in the kind of cardamom grown at ʿIdhaj whose juice was good for gout (§ 63).¹⁵ He devotes much space in the *Risāla* to medicinal springs, such as the one of Zazāwand near Lake Urmia, “by common accord and agreement, the best issuing from any opening in the earth”; he says that he himself once carried thither a man who suffered from all sorts of physical and nervous afflictions, from baldness to perpetual melancholia, and who had an arrowhead imbedded in his body, and the extractive power of the water drew out the arrowhead after three days (§ 18).

II

It has been observed above that, given the highly fragmentary nature of references in the sources to Abū Dulaf, it is not possible clearly to distinguish the various phases of his career, let alone to assign dates for them. We know that he enjoyed the patronage of various ministers and rulers at courts in Iraq and the Persian lands. The 4th/10th century was one of political fragmentation throughout the Islamic world, with the political unity of the Baghdad Caliphate irreparably shattered and the authority of the Abbasids now at its nadir under the tutelage of the Būyids. In the Persian lands specifically, the period saw the emergence of various indigenous dynasties, many of them Dailamī, but some of them of Kurdish and even Iranised Arab origin, in western and central Iran. Already in Khurasan and Transoxania, the Sāmānid amirate was prosperous and flourishing, and the Amīrs’ court at Bukhara was a centre for the nascent New Persian language and literature, the development of which is associated with figures like Rūdākī and Daqīqī. The Dailamī Būyids dominated western and central Iran and also Iraq, but their rule was never monolithic, even under the most forceful of the Amīrs, ‘Aḍud ad-Daula (338-72/949-83). There were usually several first-rate centres of political and cultural life, the courts

¹⁵ *Qāqulla*, identified with cardamom, *Elettaria cardamomum*, e.g. in Ibn al-Baiṭar, tr. Part 3, 54-5, 56-7, Nos. 1722, 1725, in *Tuhfat al-aḥbāb*, glossaire de la matière médicale marocaine, ed. and tr. H.P.J. Renaud and G.S. Colin (Paris 1934), tr. 149, No. 342, in Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, 584, and in Siggel, *Wörterbuch*, 584, *pace* Minorsky’s “saltwort or glasswort”, *op. cit.*, 60 n. 4.

of various members of the Būyid family, such as Ray, Hamadhān, Iṣfahān and Shirāz, as well as Baghdad itself, no longer the cultural cynosure of the Islamic world, even before the rise of Fāṭimid Cairo.¹⁶ Political fragmentation was not accompanied by any cultural regression, rather the reverse; there were now unparalleled opportunities for scholars and literary men to benefit from enlightened patronage and to move around from court to court trying their fortune.¹⁷

The revival of New Persian in the eastern parts of the Iranian world seems to us, with hindsight, a significant new development in the evolution of the Islamic civilisation, but contemporaries cannot have discerned the potentialities here. The primacy in learning and literature of Arabic, the "tongue of the angels", was still almost total. The eastern fringes of the Islamic world were moreover bastions of Sunnī orthodoxy in theology and law and of Arabic scholarship in all its manifestations. Something of the vitality and breadth of this scholarship can be seen in the fourth section of Tha'ālibī's literary anthology, the *Yatīmat ad-dahr fī maḥāsīn ahl al-'aṣr*, on the poets and literary men of the eastern Iranian lands, and not least in the careers of such outstanding Arabic scholars as the Khurasanian Tha'ālibī himself or the Khwārazmian Bīrūnī. The Būyid dominions saw a remarkable flowering of Arabic culture, a culture to which the Dailamī Amīrs who came after the triumvirate of founding fathers, the sons of Būya, allowed themselves enthusiastically to be assimilated: a vivid transformation from the barbarism and grossness of life in the mountains of Dailam from

¹⁶ It was, of course, long before the realities of the situation began to sink into men's minds, that Baghdad's palmiest days were over and that she would never again have unchallenged primacy, whether politically or culturally; hence the Vizier Abū l-Faḍl b. al-'Amīd could still pontificate that he measured the excellence and intelligence of a man by his enthusiasm for and appreciation of Baghdad (Tha'ālibī, *Laṭā'if al-ma'ārif*, ed. I. al-Abyārī and Ḥ.K. aṣ-Ṣairafī [Cairo 1960], 170-1, tr. Bosworth, *The book of curious and entertaining information* [Edinburgh 1968], 124-5).

¹⁷ This is emphasised by H. Busse in his *Chalif und Grosskönig, die Buyiden im Iraq (945-1055)* (Beirut-Wiesbaden 1969), 501 ff.: "To a much greater extent than the preceding centuries, the Būyid period is a century of princely patronage; not only the outstanding figures in science and literature, but also numerous less significant figures, sought and found their Maecenases at the many courts of rulers in the separate states into which even the heartland of the Islamic world had dissolved. Baṣra and Ahwāz, Aleppo, Mosul and Mayyāfāriqīn, Hamadhān, Iṣfahān, Ray and Arrajān, towns which in the early Abbasid period had existed in the shadow of Baghdad, became important cultural centres in the tenth and eleventh centuries ..."

which they had only recently emerged.¹⁸ Such figures as Abū Ḥayyān at-Tauḥidī, al-Muḥassin b. 'Alī at-Tanūkhī, Badī' az-Zamān al-Hamadhānī, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm aṣ-Ṣābi' and, in the last phase of his life, Mutanabbī, were all part of the rich fabric of Arabic culture under the Būyids. Moreover, the role of patrons and encouragers of scholars and creative artists like these was filled not only by the Amīrs themselves but even more so by their Viziers and officials, such as Abū l-Faḍl b. al-'Amīd, the Ṣāhib Ismā'il b. 'Abbād, Abū Muḥammad al-Muhallabī and Abū 'Abdallāh b. Sa'dān. These minsters were themselves scholars and littérateurs of high merit. It goes without saying that they were all masters of the elaborate epistolary style of Arabic which was becoming *de rigueur* in the chanceries of the central and eastern parts of the Islamic world, but the Ṣāhib b. 'Abbād was equally expert as a theologian, literary critic and lexicographer, whilst Abū 'Alī Aḥmad [b.] Miskawaih, secretary in Bahā' ad-Daula's administration, has left us an official journal-cum-chronicle which is the prime historical source for much of the Būyid period.¹⁹

As well as encouraging poets, philologists and other literary men, the Būyid courts provided an intellectual atmosphere that seems to have been unusually broadminded. One meets here the paradox that, whilst Shī'ism as a theological system was basically authoritarian in its demand for unquestioning obedience to the charismatic figure of the Imām, in practice Shī'i dynasties like the Ḥamdānids, Fātimids and Būyids often encouraged theological and philosophical speculation to a degree unknown in conservative, orthodox Sunnī societies. The circles for intellectual discussion and disputation which Ṣamṣām ad-Daula's minister Ibn Sa'dān assembled round himself during his vizierate in Baghdad for that ruler (373-4/983-5) are documented for us in Abū Ḥayyān at-Tauḥidī's *Kitāb al-Imtā' wa-l-mu'ānasa*, and this book shows that conversation ranged over the most varied topics of religion, philosophy, literature and science.²⁰

¹⁸ On the brutishness of life in Dailam, see Bosworth, "Military organisation under the Būyids of Persia and Iraq", *Oriens*, XVIII-XIX (1967), 146. Tha'ālibī has a brief chapter on those members of the Būyid royal family who were also poets, including 'Aḍud ad-Daula and 'Izz ad-Daula Bakhtiyār, though one feels that this chapter has been included more for its curiosity value than its intrinsic literary worth (*Yatīmat ad-dahr*, II, 216-23).

¹⁹ See on the culture of the Būyids in Iraq specifically, but with much reference to cultural life under the dynasty in general, Busse's chapter "Literature and science" in his *Chalif und Grosskönig*, 498-532.

²⁰ Cf. Busse, *op. cit.*, 509-10, and S.M. Stern, *EI*² art. "Abū 'l-Ḥayyān al-Tawḥidī".

III

This was the sort of milieu in which a figure like Abū Dulaf could flourish mightily. His period amongst the Sāmānids, at a time when he was probably still fairly young, has already been noted in connection with his epistles. The itinerary of the first *Risāla* brings him back from China via India and Afghanistan, where in that region of south-eastern Afghanistan known as Zamīndāwar (modern district of Qandahār) he may have seen something of the temple of the god Zūn, mentioned by Arab historians of the Muslim raids into that region, and probably constituting the tribal cult of the local rulers, the Zumbils, tenacious opponents of the Muslims there down to the Ṣaffārid period. Abū Dulaf says that he spent some time with the Ṣaffārid Amīrs of Sistān, epigoni and distant connections of the brothers Ya'qūb and 'Amr b. al-Laith, who had in the previous century built up an enormous if transient military empire which had dealt the *coup-de-grâce* to caliphal control over much of southern and eastern Persia.

In the closing paragraph of the first *Risāla*, Abū Dulaf says that he proceeded from Zamīndāwar to the court of the Amīr Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Aḥmad (read : Aḥmad b. Muḥammad) (331-52/943-63), i.e. he must have been in Zarang, although the Ṣaffārid capital is not specifically named. These Ṣaffārids of the 4th/10th century were great patrons of the arts and of learning; Amīr Aḥmad was the *mamdūḥ* of the Persian poet Rūdakī, whilst his son Khalaf was the patron of Badī' az-Zamān al-Hamadhānī and the commissioner of a huge Qur'ān commentary in 100 volumes which, not surprisingly, has failed to survive.²¹ Minorsky doubted whether Abū Dulaf could have really made the immense journey from China via South-East Asia and India back to the Islamic lands, but thought it probable that he went directly from the Sāmānid dominions to Sistān on some occasion or other.²² This would have been an easy enough journey, for the Ṣaffārids had been since 298/311 vassals of the Sāmānids, and relations between the two courts were intimate.²³ It was probably during this episode

²¹ See on these Ṣaffārids of the 4th/10th century, the chapter by Bosworth, "The Tāhirids and Ṣaffārids", in *Cambridge history of Iran*, IV, ed. R.N. Frye (Cambridge 1975), 90-135.

²² *Abū-Dulaf Mis'ar ibn Muḥalhil's travels in Iran*, 15-18.

²³ See the anonymous *Ta'rikh-i Sistān*, ed. M.S. Bahār (Tehran 1314/1935), 316 ff., which records the sending of rich presents from Bukhārā to Amīr Aḥmad and gives the text of Rūdakī's famous eulogy to the Ṣaffārid prince.

of his life that Abū Dulaf visited Tīz and Makrān, i.e. modern Baluchistan, which had once been part of the Ṣaffārid empire and may still have been a dependency of Sistān; he mentions in § 18 of the second *Risāla* that he intends to speak of these obscure regions, but never actually does so.

What else we know of Abū Dulaf's life connects him with the courts of the Būyids, and especially with those of Shīrāz and Ray. Tha'ālībī in his *adab* work, the *Laṭā'if al-ma'ārif*, and on the authority of Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Maṣṣīṣī, records his presence at 'Aḍud ad-Daula's court of Shīrāz, where he took part in a light-hearted disputation and contest of wits with another courtier, Abū 'Alī Aḥmad al-Hā'im al-Madā'inī, a friend of the Qāḍī at-Tanūkhī. In the course of this, Abū Dulaf overwhelmed his opponent in a rhetorical tour-de-force in which he enumerated a large number of the special products and the unpleasant characteristics of the different regions of the Islamic world, so that the Amīr exclaimed in delight, "O Abū Dulaf, you are a monarch frequenting the company of monarchs!" and rewarded him with money and a robe of honour.²⁴

He also spent some time with the Vizier Abū l-Faḍl Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusain, called Ibn al-'Amīd, who for over thirty years, until his death in 360/970, was Vizier to 'Imād ad-Daula's son Rukn ad-Daula (ruled as an independent ruler in Ray and Jibāl 335-66/947-77). This means that Abū Dulaf's first contact with the Vizier was most probably in Ray, Rukn ad-Daula's capital, unless it happened to fall within those post-338/949 years during which Ibn al-'Amīd was some time in Shīrāz as mentor of the youthful 'Aḍud ad-Daula b. Rukn ad-Daula; the sources seem to be silent on the exact date when Ibn al-'Amīd returned to the service of Rukn ad-Daula in Ray, though he is mentioned as being at Ray in 355/966 when he and Rukn ad-Daula coped with the influx of Khurasanian *ghāzīs* into the Būyid territories.²⁵

It is to the younger contemporary of Abū Dulaf, Abū Ḥayyān at-Tauḥidī (d. shortly after 400/1009-10), himself relating on the authority of one of his friends in Ray, the secretary Abū Ghālib al-A'raj

²⁴ *Laṭā'if al-ma'ārif*, 233-9, tr. 145-6.

²⁵ Miskawaih, *Tajārib al-umam*, ed. and tr. H.F. Amedroz and D.S. Margoliouth, *The eclipse of the 'Abbasid Caliphate* (Oxford 1921-2), II, 222 ff., tr. V, 234 ff.; cf. Cl. Cahen, *EI*² art. "Ibn al-'Amīd", and Amedroz, "The Vizier Abu-l-Faḍl Ibn al-'Amīd, from the *Tajārib al-umam* of Abu 'Alī Miskawaih", *Der Islam*, III (1912), 331 ff.

al-Isfahānī, that we owe our exiguous information about one episode of Abū Dulaf's relations with Ibn al-'Amīd. Tauḥīdī himself was one of the most versatile writers and interesting characters of his age. The range of his accomplishments and interests was great, as was stressed by Yāqūt in his long biography of Tauḥīdī, embracing all the traditional religious and literary sciences, together with an interest in Ṣūfism and an expressed intent, in his own literary compositions, of following the paths laid down by Jāḥiẓ.²⁶ Yāqūt further describes him as "a mainstay of the Banū Sāsān, having a scurrilous (*sakhīf*) tongue, quite unheeding of whether he was treated ill or well, concentrating all his efforts on blaming and pointing out defects".²⁷ The mathematician and engineer Abū l-Wafā' al-Būzajānī, who introduced Tauḥīdī to the Vizier Ibn Sa'dān, commented concerning Tauḥīdī's unorthodox way of life, "Do you imagine that you will be able to recover this position (sc. of respect in Abū l-Wafā's eyes), with the neglectfulness, the careless attitude, the self-abandonment to ignoble ways, which you have acquired through frequenting the company of Ṣūfīs, travelling folk, and vile and low spongers?".²⁸ Tauḥīdī was thus something of an "outsider", akin in temperament to Abū Dulaf himself, and it is a minor mystery of the period why Tauḥīdī, who must have known Abū Dulaf either directly or at one remove, through their common frequenting of the Būyid courts, does not in his works devote more space to Abū Dulaf and his activities.

In his capacity as a physician, Abū Dulaf had treated the Vizier Ibn al-'Amīd for a chronic disease which had come upon him; one might infer from this that these events took place towards the end of the Vizier's life. In an epistle quoted *in extenso* by Tauḥīdī from Abū Ghālib, Ibn al-'Amīd reproaches Abū Dulaf for failing to give him any relief in the opening stages of his malady, when the treatment was straightforward and a cure perfectly possible.²⁹ He confesses, however, that he has no faith in the efficacy of his chiding, in view

²⁶ Of Tauḥīdī's literary works, only the poetry is palpably inferior.

²⁷ Yāqūt, *Irshād*, V, 380.

²⁸ Tauḥīdī, *Kitāb al-Imtā' wa-l-mu'ānasa*, ed. Aḥmad Amin and Aḥmad az-Zain (Cairo 1358-63/1939-44), I, 7, cf. D.S. Margoliouth, "Some extracts from the *Kitāb al-Imtā' wa-l-Mu'ānasah* of Abū Ḥayyān Tauḥīdī", *Islamica*, II (1926), 382.

²⁹ In his biography of the Vizier, Ibn Khallikān says that he suffered alternately from bouts of colic and gout, both of these being apparently chronic conditions (*Wafayāt al-a'yān wa-anbā' abnā' az-zamān*, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās [Beirut 1968-72], V, 109-10, tr. Baron Mc Guckin de Slane [London-Paris 1842-71], III, 261).

of Abū Dulaf's well-known effrontery, smooth-tonguedness and mendacity. An example of this is his claim to be a descendant of the great physician and philosopher Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā' ar-Rāzī through the latter's daughter. Ibn al-'Amīd retorts that he knew Rāzī personally, that he never had a daughter, and that even if he had had one, Abū Dulaf could not possibly be her offspring because of all the evil qualities within him. He goes on to pour scorn on Abū Dulaf's claims to medical skill, asserting that his condition was not an impossibly difficult one to control or cure (enunciating here a long list of much worse maladies), and did not require the supernatural healing powers of Jesus Christ himself, or the agency of magical formulae, or the use of such talismanic objects as Moses' staff, Joseph's shirt, a slice from the hump of Ṣāliḥ's she-camel, etc. If he had known that Abū Dulaf required such means as these to bring him relief, he would have preferred death as a release from his ministrations! Finally, he laments that his good opinion of Abū Dulaf has been betrayed, and his earlier praise of him, as a man behind whose mask of frivolity lay a basic seriousness, has been falsified by events, to the joy of his associates, who had always been secretly suspicious of Abū Dulaf: in the words of the old adage, "Many a person from whom good is expected disappoints you".

The narrator of the episode, Abū Ghālib, asked Abū Dulaf whether he had defended himself against these accusations. Abū Dulaf told him that he had never got beyond preparing the draft of a reply, being fearful of the Vizier's capacity for mischief-making and revenge, hence he had contented himself with some reflections on the ingratitude of the great men of the age towards their servants and retainers.³⁰

Where the truth lay between the two viewpoints is impossible for us to judge. It may be that Abū Dulaf had boasted of his medical expertise and raised false hopes by his claims, or it may be that, on the principle of give a dog a bad name, a raffish character like Abū Dulaf became a target for unmerited obloquy. However, one must remember that Tauḥīdī was hostile towards Ibn al-'Amīd, and would not have written something which put the Vizier in the position of a wronged person if he could have avoided it; elsewhere in the *Akhlāq al-wazīrain* he charges him with miserliness.³¹ Hence one must conclude

³⁰ Tauḥīdī, *Mathālib* (or *Akhlāq*) *al-wazīrain*, ed. Muḥammad b. Tāwīt at-Ṭanjī (Damascus 1965), 438-45.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 365-8.

that there probably was something in the charge that Abū Dulaf had behaved discredibly.

IV

It is necessary now to turn our attention to the other great Vizier of the Būyids with whom Abū Dulaf was closely connected and who was, indeed, the stimulus for Abū Dulaf's composing his *Qaṣida sāsāniyya*. Our information on Abū Dulaf's relations with the Ṣāhib Ibn 'Abbād and his circle derives mainly from the *Yatīmat ad-dahr* of Abū Maṣṣūr b. Muḥammad ath-Tha'ālībī (250-429/961-1038), and especially from the third section on the poets and authors of Jibāl, Fārs, Gurgān and Ṭabaristān, in the sixth chapter on the poets who thronged the Ṣāhib Ibn 'Abbād's court.³² For Tha'ālībī, Abū Dulaf was primarily a protégé of the Ṣāhib's, and elsewhere in the *Yatīma* he quotes thirty-one verses of a *rajaz* poem by Abū Dulaf in praise of the Ṣāhib and couched in conventional, eulogistic language.³³

The "Supremely-capable one", *Kāfī l-Kufāt*, the Ṣāhib Ismā'il b. 'Abbād at-Ṭāliqānī (the title Ṣāhib "companion" stemming either from his relations with his master in the arts of secretaryship, Abū l-Faḍl b. al-'Amīd, or from his loyalty to his political master Mu'ayyid ad-Daula b. Rukn ad-Daula), was born *ca.* 326/938 and died at Ray in 385/995. His official career began as a secretary under the wing of Ibn al-'Amīd and then in 347/958 he entered the service of 'Aḍud ad-Daula's younger brother Mu'ayyid ad-Daula in Baghdad. Just before the death of Rukn ad-Daula in 366/976-7, Mu'ayyid ad-Daula became governor of Ray and Iṣfahān under the overlordship of 'Aḍud ad-Daula,³⁴ with the Ṣāhib Ibn 'Abbād as his chief secretary and Abū l-Faḍl b. al-'Amīd, son of Abū l-Faḍl, as his Vizier. Abū l-Faḍl quarreled with the Ṣāhib, and tried to procure his dismissal and death; it is unclear from the sources who made the first move, but with aid from 'Aḍud ad-Daula, Mu'ayyid ad-Daula succeeded in getting rid of Abū l-Faḍl instead, and replaced him as Vizier by the Ṣāhib. Fakhr

³² Ed. Damascus (1304/1886-7), III, 174-94, ed. Cairo, III, 356-77.

³³ Ed. Cairo, III, 227-9.

³⁴ This is the information about the partition of territories given by Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Malik al-Hamadhānī in his *Takmilat ta'rīkh at-Ṭabarī*, ed. A. Y. Kan'ān (Beirut 1961), I, 228; the details in the other sources vary slightly. See J. C. Bürgel, *Die Hofkorrespondenz 'Aḍud ad-Daulas und ihr Verhältniss zu anderen historischen Quellen der frühen Būyiden* (Wiesbaden 1965), 90-1.

ad-Daula, another brother of 'Aḏud ad-Daula and Mu'ayyid ad-Daula, to whom territories in western Jibāl and possibly (according to one source) Ray, had been allotted at the family conference in Iṣfahān of 365/975-6 (see above), was dispossessed from his territories in 369/979-80, and Mu'ayyid ad-Daula ruled in Ray, with the Ṣāhib as his Vizier, till his death in 373/983-4.³⁵ The Ṣāhib now made a sharp volte-face and entered the service of his old opponent Fakhr ad-Daula, who returned from his exile in the Sāmānid lands; Fakhr ad-Daula was now the senior member of the family, and the Ṣāhib adjudged him the most likely person to retain his services.³⁶ He eventually died at Ray, still in the Būyid Amīr's service, but having fallen latterly into some disfavour, so that his property was confiscated after his death.³⁷

Some discussion of these various stages of the Ṣāhib's official career is necessary to show where the lives of the Vizier and Abū Dulaf could have meshed together. There is a strong presumption that they were together at Ray, in that Tauḥidī mentions how the Ṣāhib derived information for his interest in the jargon of beggars and strolling folk from a prominent member of the fraternity at Ray, al-Aqṭa' al-Kūfī (see below); it seems likely that this was the time at which Abū Dulaf was delighting the Ṣāhib with his *recherché* knowledge on the Banū Sāsān, although unequivocal evidence which would place Abū Dulaf at the side of the Ṣāhib in Baghdad, Iṣfahān or Ray, is lacking. It seems nevertheless likely that Abū Dulaf should have stayed on in Ray after the time of Abū l-Faḍl b. al-'Amīd and passed into the Ṣāhib's circle, even if he had not known him before. The reference in the *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, vv. 110-11, to the Abbasid Caliph

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 140 ff.

³⁶ An assumption apparently justified, if the words attributed by Tha'ālībī to Fakhr ad-Daula, when the Ṣāhib, with feigned modesty sought to excuse himself from the newly-succeeded Amīr's service, are true: "You have a right to succeed to the Vizierate under this dynasty, just as we have to the rulership; so let each one of us keep to his own allotted speciality" (*Yatīmat ad-dahr*, III, 194; also in Yāqūt, *Irshād al-arīb*, ed. Margoliouth [London 1907-26], II, 275, with the context of the dictum more clearly indicated).

³⁷ See *EI*² arts. "Aḏud al-Dawla" (H. Bowen), "Fakhr al-Dawla" and "Ibn 'Abbād" (C. Cahen), and for the detailed history of the Būyid amirates in Persia during these years, Bürgel, *op. cit.* The principal literary sources for the Ṣāhib's life are Tauḥidī's *Akhlāq al-wazīraīn* and the long article in Yāqūt, *Irshād*, II, 272-343; and there exists on him a monograph by M.Ḥ. Āl Yāsīn, *aṣ-Ṣāhib ibn 'Abbād, hayātuḥu wa-adabuhu* (Baghdad 1376/1957).

al-Muṭī' (334-63/946-76) as if he were a contemporary, may point to the poem's composition during that reign.

The Ṣāhib was a man of very wide learning. He wrote several theological works, in which his sympathies are shown to have been with the Mu'tazilī sect; one of these works, the *Tadhkira fī l-uṣūl al-khamsa*, was a re-statement of the five classic principles of the Mu'tazila, the unity of God's nature and attributes, His necessary justice, the "promise and threat" of Heaven and Hellfire, the "intermediate position" or avoidance of an extreme attitude in political questions, and the "ordering of good and the forbidding of evil".³⁸ Tauḥīdī mentions that Abū Dulaf once related to him some verses which he had composed about the Ṣāhib's fervent adherence to Mu'tazilī ideas, including the line that

He denies the existence of "compulsion",³⁹ yet he was brought forth unwillingly into the world.⁴⁰

The Ṣāhib's philological interests led him to compile an Arabic dictionary in ten volumes, the *Muḥīt bi-l-luḡha*, part of which is extant, and he accounted himself the pupil and disciple of the famous grammarian of Hamadhān, Abū l-Ḥusain Aḥmad b. Fāris (d. 395/1004),

³⁸ It has also been suggested that the Ṣāhib sympathised with the moderate Zaidi branch of the Shi'a, in so far as Zaidi Shi'ism had as yet been elaborated into a distinct sub-sect of the Shi'a in general; the convergence of the Mu'tazila and the Shi'a over certain doctrinal points makes the holding of both tendencies of opinion by one man not impossible. Certainly, Yāqūt says that "he was a partisan of Abū Ḥanīfa's law school and of the doctrinal system of the Zaidiyya" (*Irshād*, II, 276). He also wrote poetry in praise of the house of 'Alī and the martyrdoms of its members. see below, p. 75. W. Madelung has emphasised the warm welcome to his court circle and the patronage which the Ṣāhib extended to the Alids and to Shi'i scholars ("Imamism and Mu'tazilite theology", in *Le Shi'isme Imāmīte*, Colloque de Strasbourg (6-9 mai 1968) [Paris 1970], 20-1). The Ṣāhib's father Abū l-Ḥasan 'Abbād had also been a supporter of the Mu'tazila and had written a book on the Qur'ān expressing this viewpoint, according to Yāqūt, *Irshād*, II, 274.

³⁹ *Jabr*, the idea that all actions come from God, and cannot emanate from man; the Mu'tazila applied the term *Mujbira* "partisans of the doctrine of *jabr*" to such orthodox groups as the Ahl al-Ḥadīth and later the Ash'arīs, who denied the Mu'tazilī tenet of *qadar* or free will, see W. Montgomery Watt, *Freewill and predestination in early Islam* (London 1948), 96-9.

⁴⁰ Tauḥīdī, *Akhlāq al-wazīrain*, 174-5; *idem*, *Kitāb al-baṣā'ir wa-dh-dhakhā'ir*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Kilānī (Damascus 1964-6), III, 598-9; also in Yāqūt, *Irshād*, II, 303-4, with slightly different wording.

who himself ended his days at Ray.⁴¹ The Ṣāḥib's administrative correspondence, his *Rasā'il*, became a model for later generations of secretaries to emulate, and as a literary critic, he wrote an exposé of the defects in Mutanabbī's poetry, cited at length by Tha'ālibī.⁴² The latter further mentions, relating from a physician called Abū Ja'far at-Ṭabarī al-Balādhurī, that the Ṣāḥib composed a work on medicine to which even Thābit b. Qurra or Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā' ar-Rāzī would not have been able to add anything significant.⁴³

Side-by-side with these laudable literary and scholarly pursuits, those of any cultivated *adīb* and *kātib* of the period, the Ṣāḥib had this interest in the Islamic underworld and its jargon mentioned by Tha'ālibī and Tauḥidī, and this fascination for what can only be described as the pornography of the period. Tauḥidī attributes to the Ṣāḥib verses in which the Ṣāḥib boasts both of his Mu'tazilī beliefs and of his sexual preference for partners of the male sex.⁴⁴ Similar accusations are placed in the mouth of the Amīr Fakhr ad-Daula by other sources, that the Ṣāḥib asserted that "the only real religious system is the Mu'tazilī one, and the only enjoyable form of copulation is that with men".⁴⁵ Although the Ṣāḥib is said to have angrily disavowed these sentiments, the close correlation noted by modern psychologists between homosexuality and an interest in pornography makes the charge not impossible. Again according to Tauḥidī, when the Ṣāḥib was feeling in a lively and stimulated mood, one would hear nothing from him but talk about the famous *mukhannath* 'Ubāda, the boon-companion of such Caliphs as al-Ma'mūn and al-Mutawakkil,⁴⁶ and about the notorious *mājin* poet of al-Ma'mūn's reign, self-confessed sodomite and pathic, Jaḥshūya,⁴⁷ and such-like characters.⁴⁸

⁴¹ See *EI*² art. *s.v.* (H. Fleisch). The Ṣāḥib's own compositions are detailed by Yāqūt, *Irshād*, II, 315-16.

⁴² *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, I, 139 ff.; for the Ṣāḥib's activity as a scholar, see Pellat, *EI*² art. "Ibn 'Abbād".

⁴³ *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, III, 204-6.

⁴⁴ *Akhlāq al-wazīrain*, 214.

⁴⁵ Tha'ālibī, *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, III, 203; Yāqūt, *Irshād*, II, 327-8.

⁴⁶ Died ca. 250/864; a short biography in Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo 1951), I, 429, No. 176, ed. Iḥsān 'Abbās (Beirut 1973-4), II, 153-4, No. 210.

⁴⁷ See Ibn Ṭaifūr, *Kitāb Baghdadād*, ed. M.Z.H. al-Kautharī (Cairo 1368/1949), 166, and Ibn al-Mu'tazz, *Ṭabaqāt ash-shu'arā'*, ed. 'A.A. Farrāj (Cairo 1375/1956), 309, 388-9.

⁴⁸ *Akhlāq al-wazīrain*, 175.

The supreme pornographer of the Ṣāhib's age and arch-exponent of *sukhf*, scurrilousness and shamelessness in literature, and *mujūn*, levity and scoffing, was the notorious Abū 'Abdallāh al-Ḥusain b. Aḥmad, called Ibn al-Ḥajjāj (d. 391/1001). There had always been a vein of earthiness and obscenity in Arabic literature from the earliest known times. The Bedouin poets of the Jāhiliyya and the Umayyad period had used scabrous enough language in their satires against rival poets and tribes, as the *Naqā'id* of Jarīr and Farazdaq amply demonstrate, but this coarseness seems of a piece with the harsh life of the desert environment, untempered by any of the refinements of civilised life. As such, it does not grate intolerably, but seems the natural corollary of a way of existence that was often nasty, brutish and short. Ibn al-Ḥajjāj, on the other hand, used the language of the dregs of urban society, the Baghdad slums,⁴⁹ and he appears to us as a pure pornographer, delighting in his filth and his ability to shock; his poems are acres of dreary obscenity, eulogies of unnatural vice, unredeemed by what would appear to us as stylishness or wit. He boasts outright of his impudence and scatology as being positive virtues and as embodying a salutary reaction against the bland and colourless sentimentality of other poets :

The *sukhf*⁵⁰ of my songs is necessary, for do we not all enjoy life and have cast off all shame ?

Is there ever a house without ■ privy, and could any intelligent person stay in such a house ?

.....

When silent, I am laden with fragrance like a perfumer's shop, but when I speak, the stench of the privy rises up towards you.

.....

I am the cleaner of privies, and my song is nothing but a sewer.

And in the same vein Ibn al-Ḥajjāj asserts truculently,

⁴⁹ Tha'ālibi says that his words were "intertwined with the language of the prisoners of the Khuld palace in Baghdad (*Khuldiyyūn*; perhaps, however, "denizens of the Khuld quarter of the city"; the word appears in Jāhiz, *Kitāb al-bukhalā'*, ed. Ḥājirī, 50, tr. Pellat, 70, as *Khulaidiyya*), with that of the beggars (*mukaddīn*) and with that of the rowdies and bullies (*ahl ash-shaṭāra*)" (*Yatīmat ad-dahr*, III, 31).

⁵⁰ The *sakhf* or exponent of *sukhf* is defined in the *Rasā'il* or letters of Badi' az-Zamān al-Hamadhānī as "the one who is heedless about the consequences to him of what he does, and the one whose crown of the head is unperturbed by a blow" (*Kashf al-ma'ānī wa-l-bayān*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Aḥḍab aṭ-Ṭarābulusī [Beirut 1890], 175).

O Aḥmad b. 'Amr, do you, by God, know anything amongst mankind like my poetry?

Poetry from which the privy flows out, from the twin sources of my mind and my mouth (literally, throat).

Its odour gives forth stinking meanings, just as if it were an involuntary emission from the anus.⁵¹

In later times, the authorities often forbade the circulation of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry, and in the early 8th/14th century manual of *ḥisba* or market practice by Ibn al-Ukhuwwa, the *Ma'ālim al-qurba fī aḥkām al-ḥisba*, schoolmasters are forbidden to let boys in their charge get their hands on copies of the *Dīwān*.⁵² Despite all this, Tha'ālibī comments that "Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's *Dīwān* was spread to distant lands more rapidly than proverbs and current sayings, and travelled more quickly than a phantom", and this seems to be regrettably true.⁵³ Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's contemporaries undoubtedly rushed to get their hands on his verses; copies of the *Dīwān* fetched from 50 to 70 dinārs, according to Tha'ālibī,⁵⁴ and one of the highest dignitaries of the Abbasid caliphate in Baghdad, the Naqīb of the Alids, the Sharif ar-Raḍī Muḥammad b. Ṭāhir (d. 406/1015), was the friend and admirer of the poet, and made a selection of his verses, *an-Naẓf min as-sakhīf*.⁵⁵ The Ṣāhib Ibn 'Abbād was likewise an enthusiast for Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's poetry, and was able to quote it from memory on appropriate occasions;⁵⁶ in turn, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj addressed laudatory poems to the Vizier.⁵⁷

The interest in low life and all its manifestations, so characteristic of the 3rd/9th and 4th/10th centuries, seems to stem from the progress of urbanisation in the Islamic lands, with the concomitant economic prosperity making people more aware of the gaps between social classes. The supreme centre of manufacture and consumption, Baghdad, for

⁵¹ Tha'ālibī, *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, III, 33, 34-5, cf. Mez, *Die Renaissance des Islāms*, 258, tr. 269.

⁵² Ed. R. Levy (London 1938), 172, tr. 60. Ironically enough, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj himself for a time filled the office of *muḥtasib* in Baghdad, see *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, III, 72.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, III, 32.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, III, 35.

⁵⁵ See Mez, *op. cit.*, 258-9, 261, tr. 268-70, 271; this selection is not apparently extant, cf. *GAL*, I², 81, Suppl. I, 131-2.

⁵⁶ Cf. *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, III, 49-1, where the Ṣāhib, whilst campaigning in Gurgān with his retinue, cites an apposite verse on smelling an unpleasant odour one night.

⁵⁷ Yāqūt, *Irshād*, II, 326.

the supply of whose wants luxury foodstuffs came from places as far away as Khwārazm in Central Asia,⁵⁸ and the melting-pot for a multiplicity of races, sects and faiths, Iraq, were the natural centres for the growth of the new literature of *mujūn* around such figures as Wāliba b. al-Ḥubāb, Abū Nuwās, al-Ḥusain b. aḍ-Ḍaḥḥāk and their successors.

Ibn al-Ḥajjāj was the culmination of nearly two centuries' evolution of this urban poetic development, as was another bizarre character of Ibn al-Ḥajjāj's age, Abū l-Qāsim al-Baghdādī, the anti-hero of Abū l-Muṭahhar Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Azdī's *Ḥikāyat Abī l-Qāsim*, probably written during the first half of the 5th/11th century. It purports to show a day in the life of a Baghdad parasite and sponger, Abū l-Qāsim, who by his glib tongue and ostentatious piety secures an invitation to a feast. Once there, he insults his host and the guests abominably, uses his linguistic skill to launch into a comparison of the respective merits of Baghdad and Iṣfahān, and gets more and more drunk until he sinks into a stupor; but the next day he repents, and assumes his usual mask of religiousness.⁵⁹ The *Ḥikāya* is not very long, but is not easy to understand, especially as the author frequently uses the slang and obscenities of the Baghdad riff-raff.⁶⁰ The physical characteristics of Abū l-Qāsim himself are described as "worse than the mud in which fishermen are covered, and more stinking than the smell of the tanners"; moreover, "he used to frequent the company of gamblers and drinkers, he was endowed with the traits of the effeminate and pathics (*makhānīth*) and the monkey-trainers, and he used to teach the arts of the astrologers and of the jugglers and mountebanks". Plumbing the depths even further, he is described in two verses as

An immoral fellow, whose chin (or beard, *dhaqan*) vouchsafes traces of the perfume
of anuses and vulvas,

⁵⁸ See Tha'ālibī, *Laṭā'if al-ma'ārif*, 226, tr. 142, on the melons of Khwārazm, exported to Baghdad in leaden containers packed with snow during the caliphates of al-Ma'mūn and al-Wāthiq.

⁵⁹ See *ET*² art. "Abū 'l-Qāsim" (J. Horovitz).

⁶⁰ Our comprehension of it is not helped by the inadequacies of Mez's edition, *Abul-kāsim, ein bagdāder Sittenbild* (Heidelberg 1902), which Margoliouth criticised in a review not so much for its scholarly demerits but because he considered so disgusting a text to be unworthy of a serious scholar's attention. See further on the text of the *Ḥikāya*, F. Gabrieli, "Sulla *Ḥikāyat Abī l-Qāsim* di Abū l-Muṭahhar al-Azdī", *RSO*, XX (1942), 33-45, with many useful observations and a translation of the opening pages.

An adherent of the Mālikī law school,⁶¹ whose penis strikes faeces (literally, "sun-dried bricks", *libn*) every day in the cavities of anuses.⁶²

Naturally, Abū l-Qāsim in the course of the *Hikāya* quotes copiously from the poetry of his predecessor in the gutter, Ibn al-Ḥajjāj.

V

In the biographical passage from Tha'ālībī concerning Abū Dulaf and translated below, p. 76, the author of the *Yatīmat ad-dahr* states that Abū Dulaf was stimulated into writing his *Qaṣīda sāṣāniyya* by the example of Abū l-Ḥasan 'Uqail ('Aqīl?) b. Muḥammad al-Aḥnaf al-'Ukbarī, who was, as his *nisba* implies, an Iraqi from 'Ukbarā on the left bank of the Tigris between Baghdad and Sāmarrā, and who is classified by Tha'ālībī amongst the poets of Baghdad.⁶³ 'Ukbarī likewise enjoyed the patronage of the Ṣāḥib Ibn 'Abbād (presumably during the twenty years or so during which the Ṣāḥib was in Baghdad as Mu'ayyid ad-Daula's secretary, see above, p. 60) and delighted the Vizier's circle with his stock of lore about the Banū Sāsān; Tha'ālībī describes him as "the poet of the beggars, their elegant exponent and the wittiest amongst them, both as a general class and in their various

⁶¹ The Mālikī law school is frequently referred to in the pornography of the period in this connection, because it was believed by some people that Mālik allowed *al-waḥ' fī ḍuburihā* as a tolerated practice (*rukḥṣa*) on the basis of Qur'ān, ii, 223: "Your women are to you as cultivated land; come then to your cultivated land as you wish". See Tha'ālībī, *Bard al-akbād fī l-a'dād*, in *Khams rasā'il* (Istanbul 1301/1883), 105, l. 12, where Auzā'ī is cited as saying that *ityān an-nisā' fī adbārihinna* is one of the special characteristics of Medina (Syrian contempt for Ḥijāzī grossness?); ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*, II, 160 (discussion of the licitness or otherwise of the practice and anecdotes about it); and also Mez, *Abulkāsim*, Introd., XXVII, and G.-H. Bousquet, *La morale de l'Islam et son éthique sexuelle* (Paris 1953), 127. In fact, it seems doubtful whether Mālik allowed the practice at all; most Sunnī authorities interpreted the Qur'ānic texts as authorising only copulation *per vulvam*, but from either a frontal or rearwards position, and adduced such ḥadīths as that of the Prophet, "Approach from either the front or the back, but beware of the anus and of menstruation". See Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn al-Munajjid, *al-Ḥayāt al-jinsiyya 'ind al-'Arab, min al-Jāhiliyya ilā awākhir al-qarn ar-rabi' al-ḥijrī*² (Beirut 1975), 37-40, 123-4, where the question is discussed at length.

⁶² Mez, *op. cit.*, 3-4.

⁶³ On 'Ukbarā, see G. Le Strange, *The lands of the eastern Caliphate* (Cambridge 1905), 50-1; Abū l-Ḥasan 'Uqail is not mentioned in the long list of 'Ukbarī scholars given by Sam'ānī, *Kitāb al-Ansāb*, ed. Margoliouth (London 1913), f. 396a, but of course, he was hardly the sort of character in whom Sam'ānī would be interested.

subdivisions".⁶⁴ Tha'ālībī goes on to state that he had something written by the Ṣāhib about 'Ukbarī, from which he cites the following passage :

"If I were to recite to you now (said the Ṣāhib) what al-Aḥnaf al-'Ukbarī recited to me of his own verse — and al-Aḥnaf is the incomparable one of the Banū Sāsān in Baghdad at this present time, and is moreover a highly skilled poet — you would be filled with amazement at its elegance, and with delight at how skilfully it is put together and, not the least, at how cleverly he weaves into it the very subject in which he glories (sc. his membership of the Banū Sāsān). Thus he says,

... Nevertheless, I am, God be praised, a member of a noble house,
Through my brethren, the Banū Sāsān, the influential and bold ones.
Theirs is the land of Khurasan, and then Qāshān as far as India,
And as far as Byzantium, and the land of the Zanj, and to Bulghār and Sind.
When the roads become difficult for both the night travellers and the soldiery,
On the alert against their enemies, the Bedouins and the Kurds,
We sail forward along that way, without need of sword or even of scabbard,
And the person who fears his foes seeks refuge by means of us, in his terror.

This last verse has a particularly neat meaning. 'Ukbarī means to say that whenever a rich person, or one of the prosperous and noble classes, falls into the hands of brigands and wants to secure his release, he can say, 'I am one of the beggars'. Just look how puzzling the meaning seems to be, and then the apparently insoluble meaning is made clear".

Tha'ālībī then continues by citing two other verses from this poem, together with more verses by 'Ukbarī, including drinking poetry and lines which expatiate further on the theme of the poet's elected poverty and wandering life, e.g.

I have lived in abjectness and indigence and in roaming through distant lands in the company of a band of filthy ones.⁶⁵

I am able to utter only my unfulfilled desires, not my realisable ideas, and my sole nourishment is the sweetness of my hopes.

I have a way of life which calls for my mind to make a halt, but a foot which speaks of roaming abroad again.

The spider has built himself a house as his refuge, despite his feebleness, but I have no home like him.

Even the dung beetle has a dwelling amongst his own kind, yet unlike him, I have no companion or dwelling-place.

⁶⁴ *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, III, 122.

⁶⁵ The plural *andāl* of the text here is not in the classical lexica dealing with the root *n d l* (e.g. *LA*, XIV, 176-9, and *TA*, VIII, 131-2), but must be a plural of *nadl* = *wasakh* "filth", unless we adopt the *facilior lectio* of *andhāl* "vile, contemptible ones", yielding much the same meaning.

And also the lines

God has divided up my sustenance into portions scattered through all the lands,
and this sustenance can only be attained piecemeal.

I cannot earn any sort of a living through philosophy or poetry, but only through
trickery (*makhārīq*).

People have come to know that I am full of tricks (*akhū ḥiyāl*), so that I can only
find a gullible audience out in the deep countryside.⁶⁶

It may well be that 'Ukbarī was as extravagant and outré a character as Abū Dulaf himself, and his lost *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya* as intriguing as Abū Dulaf's one; unfortunately, we know nothing more of 'Ukbarī's life and work beyond what is communicated to us by Tha'ālibī here. It is, however, certain from this that Abū Dulaf knew of 'Ukbarī's *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, from which the lines cited above beginning.

Nevertheless I am, God be praised, a member of a noble house ...

are apparently taken; the rhyme is in *dāl*, and this is the rhyme letter of 'Ukbarī's *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, according to what Tha'ālibī says in his section on Abū Dulaf's relations with the Ṣāhib Ibn 'Abbād (see below). The matter seems to be clinched by the fact that this poem of 'Ukbarī is in the acatalectic variety of the *hazaj* metre, the very one employed by Abū Dulaf. Even though we possess only exiguous fragments of 'Ukbarī's poetic production — a mere total of 34 verses are quoted by Tha'ālibī — we can discern attitudes very similar to those of Abū Dulaf: a swaggering pride in membership of the closed circle of the beggars and in living by one's wits alone, but on the reverse side, a weariness with the life of perpetual wandering over the face of the globe and a desire to end one's days in peace and tranquillity of mind.

Similar attitudes to those of 'Ukbarī and Abū Dulaf may be discerned in the main surviving scrap of poetry by a third author of the time, Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-'Azīz as-Sūsī al-Baṣrī, whose life and work are known only to us from an exiguous mention in the *Yatīmat ad-dahr* and a rather more informative notice by Ṣafadī.⁶⁷ The *nisba* "as-Sūsī" implies a family origin in Sūs or Susa in Ahwāz, but he seems to have flourished primarily in Baghdad and other towns of Iraq, and was still alive after the year 353/964; it is thus highly probable that he was a protégé of the Būyids or their ministers at

⁶⁶ *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, III, 122-4, in the eighth chapter, on the elegancies of Baghdad poets who wrote only a small amount of poetry; cf. Mez, *Die Renaissance des Islāms*, 256-7, tr. 267.

some point at least of his career. Tha'ālībī includes him in the third section of his anthology, in a chapter on the poets of Fārs and Ahwāz, and says that he was one of the dashing and extravagant figures of the age (*aḥad shayāṭīn al-ins*); Šafadī describes him as a spendthrift and *mājin* poet. He wrote a poem in the *munsariḥ* metre of over 400 verses, describing his picaresque adventures, what Tha'ālībī calls "his peripatetic life among the various religious faiths, beliefs and modes of employment", which apparently became widely circulated (*sā'ira*). Of this, Tha'ālībī quotes the opening sixteen verses:

Praise be to God, I am bereft of worldly fortune, nor have I any clothes which need storing in a wardrobe (i.e. he has only the clothes on his back)!

To anyone contemplating my house, it is exactly on a par with the featureless desert and the salt flats.

I am perfectly safe in my house against thieves, for a thief would find nothing at all in it, neither up nor down.

My resting-place is just like a prison⁶⁸ without a guard, completely void of wealth, wherever I may roam.

My ablutions-jug is the water-jar if I wash my hands, my perfumed unguent is the earth, and the floor of my house has to serve as a wash-bowl.

White hair has come upon me early, when it affected me, and made me Farazdaq-like in my hoary-headedness.⁶⁹

I have followed the way of the Šūfis in deceit and trickery (*tanmīs*, cf. Abū Dulaf, *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, v. 43, *nammasa*), and how many skirts have I shortened!

I have carefully spread out my prayer rug during the day, and I have clipped off the moustaches which I had allowed to grow long.⁷⁰

I have stood on the *maqām* of Abraham, just as he himself stood (sc. at the building of the Ka'ba), in order that I might acquire blessing from this,

And I have said, "I have come as a pilgrim to the *ḥaram* from my own land", but [may my ... be] in my mother's vulva if I really did put on the pilgrim's garb!⁷¹

⁶⁷ *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, III, 427-8; Šalāḥ ad-Dīn Khalīl b. Aibak aṣ-Šafadī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, III, ed. S. Dederling (Damascus 1953), 261; cf. Mez, *Die Renaissance des Islāms*, 257, tr. 267-8.

⁶⁸ *Muṭbaq*, cf. Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-Bukhalā'*, 50, tr. Pellat, 70, and a line by Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, III, 75, which shows the meaning very plainly:

... Does the prisoner come back when once he has escaped from the *muṭbaq*?

⁶⁹ I have taken this as an allusion to a well-known verse of Jarīr in which he satirises Farazdaq, that the latter used to be a transgressor of the *Shari'a* when he was a youth, and now old age and hoary locks have not deterred him from the same misdeeds, see Jarīr, *Diwān*, ed. Nu'mān Muḥammad Amīn Ṭāhā (Cairo 1969-71), II, 1001; but one might alternatively take *farazdaqī* with the meaning "white, dough-like", see *LA*, XII, 182.

⁷⁰ I.e. he has adopted all the outward signs and shows of piety.

⁷¹ The orthography of the group of letters *ḥ.r.'mī* in the second hemistich causes

I have written out charms ⁷² to the point that I have been able to bring people together by my schemings,

Until after I wanted to join together a husband and bride, I then reversed my intention and pronounced the formula of divorce (?).⁷³

My words ⁷⁴ are cleansed of all dross, and how often have I winnowed them for a while and then sifted them!

Would that I knew why I have been reduced to this state of deprivation, and why I am not given the beloved one who, if I see him, only yields me pain!

Nay indeed, would that I had known, when God started to allot people's sustenance, in which prison I should find myself!

But praise be to God, who allots sustenance to mankind as He chooses, and not as I choose!⁷⁵

On the basis of these few specimen verses, one feels that the complete poem — with its opening on the theme of *Weltschmerz* and its mention of some of the practices and guises adopted by the author in his pursuit of fortune — must have been not dissimilar in spirit to the *Qaṣīda sāṣāniyyas* of 'Ukbarī and Abū Dulaf. But that Sūsī's poem is based on direct experience and observation as a wandering Sāsānī, as Abū Dulaf's poem undoubtedly is, seems rather problematical. Ṣafadī's informant Ibn Zamakdam says that he, Ibn Zamakdam, reproached Sūsī for the fabrications about himself which appeared in his poem.

problems here of interpretation. The metre requires the pattern ~ - . I have tentatively interpreted it as *ḥiri 'mmī* with *ḥirr* "lightened" (*mukhaffaf*) to *ḥir* and *waṣl* for the *hamzat al-qaṭ'* of *ummī*, as is permissible in verse. It would be possible, and orthographically simpler, to read *ḥirāmī* "my cloak of the *iḥrām*" or "my blanket", or *ḥarāmī* "my unlawful act"; but with these translations it is more difficult to find a satisfactory meaning for the whole verse.

⁷² *Uṭūf*, apparently a plural of *ʿaṭfa*, defined in the lexica as "a bead used as a charm by a wife to captivate and to strengthen the affection of her husband", see *LA*, XI, 156, and *TA*, VI, 200, or else to be connected with *ʿaṭaf*, defined as a climbing plant whose tendrils cling to tree trunks and whose root is used in charms to revive women's flagging affections for their husbands, see *LA*, XI, 158, and *TA*, loc. cit.

⁷³ The meaning here is obscure; presumably some financial gain was involved in these proceedings.

⁷⁴ It seems most obvious to read *ḥ.r.fī* as *ḥarfī*, and this meaning gives the best sense here. A conceivable reading would be *ḥurfī* "my *ḥurf* grain", since we have mention of agricultural operations (*ḥurf* apparently = the *καρδαμον* of Dioscorides and the *nasturtium* of Pliny, sc. *Lepidium sativum*, garden cress, whose little red grains were regarded by the Arab pharmacologists as a panacea for all ills, see Ibn al-Baiṭar, tr. Part I, 427-31, Nos. 653-6, *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*, tr. 76, No. 167, and Siggel, *Wörterbuch*, 28), but this gives little sense in the context of the poem as a whole.

⁷⁵ *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, loc. cit. Ṣafadī, loc. cit., quotes a further two verses by Sūsī, from a different poem and on the subject of a bridge over the Tigris.

Sūsī replied, "Hear my excuse in regard to this and listen to the whole story about how I come to write this *qaṣīda*. I inherited a handsome fortune from my father, but whilst in Baghdad, I left no kind of amusement or indulgence, depraved or innocent, unsampled; I frequented the company of monarchs and leaders, the aristocracy and the plebs, until I reached the point when I had not a dirham or dīnār, not a stick of furniture nor a shred of property left to my name. So I sat down quietly and said to myself, 'I am a poet, and if I cannot compose a poem which will excite the interest of both the best people and the masses, I will never achieve any sort of fame'. So I put together this *qaṣīda*. It soon achieved a brisk circulation amongst people and was much sought after, and was the occasion of my name being mentioned in every social gathering and my renown spreading in every meeting-place and *majlis*".⁷⁶

Yet however distant the degree of Sūsī's personal involvement in the life of strolling beggars and swindlers, his residence in the towns of Iraq and his absorption in their fleshpots would certainly provide him with adequate material for his poem, even at second hand, and if it is a pity that his lengthy poem has now been lost. We have no information on the topic of Sūsī's acquaintanceship with the work of 'Ukbarī or Abū Dulaf, though since all three poets are known to have been in Iraq for some part of their lives and were apparently contemporaries, the probability is high. It is not too much further to hazard the guess that these three authors were probably not the only ones in the central and eastern Caliphal lands of the 4th/10th century to write poetry on this subject; the popularity of these topics almost justifies one speaking of a nascent sub-genre of Arabic literature dealing with them.

VI

One or two other figures of the same ilk as Abū Dulaf and 'Ukbarī, and likewise connected with the Ṣāhib Ibn 'Abbād's circle, are known to us from Tauḥīdī's *Akhlāq al-wazīrain*. One of them is Ibn Fashīshā (whose very name seems to enshrine a scatological pun⁷⁷), described

⁷⁷ *Fashsha* expresses the idea of letting out wind gently, either from something like a waterskin, or from one of the orifices of the body, with various further nuances of meaning in its derivatives, making it roughly synonymous with *fasā* (whereas *ḍaraṭa* implies the emission of wind with a loud noise); see Lane, *Lexicon*, s.vv., and Bürgel, "Die ekphrastischen Epigramme des Abū Ṭālib al-Ma'mūnī", *Nachrichten der Akad.*

as chief of the *maṣṭaba* or dais of the beggars at Ray. Nothing is known about the person of this Ibn Fashishā, except that the Ṣāhib once recited to him some of his own verses urging the unbridled pursuit of pleasure and vice — an injunction that was hardly necessary, one feels sure, to a beggar leader, in view of our knowledge of such characters from Abū Dulaf's poem. The Ṣāhib's verses are, in fact, only noteworthy for the fact that several of the Banū Sāsān jargon words used in the *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya* are incorporated in them :

Don't hold yourself back from pleasures, if they present themselves; persist in them to the utmost, and don't bother about being blamed !

Don't spit them out again ⁷⁸ when you have attained them, but spend the night with a beardless youth,⁷⁹ a wide-buttocked lad, a loved one,

For wine ⁸⁰ and copulation,⁸¹ after indulgence with him — these are the really good things of life, so don't turn away from what is good !

Set about indulgence in eating to the full, and in wine ⁸⁰ from a flowing bowl, for fortune mingles indifferently the good with the bad.⁸²

Tauḥīdī asks, in disgust at this paean to antinomianism, is this the language of someone who calls upon God, and seeks an answer from

der Wiss. in Göttingen. I. Phil.-Hist. Kl. (1965), No. 14, 288-9. In Abū Dulaf's *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, v. 53, we also have the jargon word *fashshasha* to describe the activities of one disgusting type of beggar, see below, p. 86. The terms *fashsha* and *ḍaraṭa* are naturally commonplace in the verses of poets like Ibn al-Ḥajjāj and his school.

⁷⁸ The exact maning of the prohibition here *lā tazugqa* is not altogether clear. The verb *zaqqa* means "it (sc. ■ bird) regurgitated food from its beak into the mouth of its young" (*LA*, XII, 8-9; *TA*, VI, 371), and this sense has been followed for the translation here. But a nominal form from this root, *zaqāq* or *zaqqāq*, means "someone who drinks water at the table whilst his mouth is already stuffed with food", i.e. it is an epithet for a glutton. Following this, one might alternatively translate, "Don't stuff yourself with anything further when you have attained them ...".

⁷⁹ *Shauzar*, cf. Abū Dulaf, *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, v. 118.

⁸⁰ *Ṣamy*, cf. *ibid.*, vv. 15, 119, 130.

⁸¹ *Matr*, cf. *ibid.*, v. 15.

⁸² The uses in this verse of the words *taksīh* and *tahrīb* are somewhat ambiguous. It seems probable that these are jargon words, like the three words of the previous notes. In Abū Dulaf's poem, v. 57, *taksīh* is defined as *muṣāna'a* "flattery", whilst in *ibid.*, v. 130 and its commentary we have *hazzaba* "he created a bad reputation for himself" and the antonyms *al-hazīb* and *al-kasīh* as jargon words for "bad, corrupt" and "good" respectively. It is therefore possible that we should read here in the Ṣāhib's verses *bi-tahzīb*. One might further note a certain parallelism between the literal meanings of *kasāḥa* "he swept or piled up dust or earth" (*LA*, III, 406; *TA*, II, 211) and of *ahraba* "it scattered, blew along dust from the face of the earth", said of the wind (*LA*, II, 282; *TA*, I, 514), Whatever the exact meaning, the general sense is clear.

Him, whose example is to be followed, and who is to be an intermediary between God and Man?⁸³

The other figure whose relations with the Ṣāḥib are delineated for us by the resentful Tauḥidī is the vicious but amusing figure of al-Aqṭa' al-Munshid al-Kūfī, from the last of his *nisbas* of Iraqi origin like 'Ukbarī, a thief who had suffered the canonical punishment of an amputated hand for his misdeeds, and a vagabond who frequented the company of the beggars of the *maṣṭaba* at Ray, concerning whom he told Tauḥidī stories:

I am a man who has had one of his hands amputated for brigandage, so what do you have to say about a thief and a gambler? I am a pimp, a sodomite and a fornicator. I sow dissension [between people] with my malicious talk and I incite people into evil ways. I have no part in the virtuous pursuits of this earthly life, for I neither pray nor fast nor give alms nor go on pilgrimage. I have grown up amongst the benches and platforms of the mosques (*masāṭib*), the banks of the waterchannels, the waterfronts and the rear premises of the mosques.⁸⁴ I have travelled along with the workshy layabouts⁸⁵ for year upon year. I have inflicted wounds; I have strangled people; I have slit purses (literally, I have cut open people's sleeves to extract the money there, *ṭarartu*; outpurse = *ṭarrār*); I have bored into houses to steal from them;⁸⁶ I have killed and plundered; I have lied and blasphemed; I have drunk wine and become tipsy; I have disputed with persons and then made peace with them(?);⁸⁷ I have quarrelled violently, and I have copulated freely. There is not one reprehensible action in the whole world which I have not committed, and no foulness which I have not perpetrated ...⁸⁸

In spite of all these vices — or rather, because of them — and in spite of an inordinate love of perfumes as well as of sexual indulgence (both of which Tauḥidī condemns in him, but which Aqṭa' defends as being in accordance with the practice of the Prophet himself), the Ṣāḥib delighted in Aqṭa's company, so much so that he kept Aqṭa'

⁸³ *Akhḷāq al-wazīrain*, 214-15.

⁸⁴ *Mawākhīr*, thus defined in Ṭabarī, *Annales. Glossarium*, p. CIX: *templi posticum*, with incontrovertible references to the occurrence of the word in connection with Ziyād b. Abihī's mosque-building activities in Iraq. But one is inevitably reminded of *mākhūr*, pl. *mawākhīr* "tavern, dive", and especially in modern usage, "brothel" (< Persian *mai-khūr* "wine drinker"), the meaning of which would fit the context equally well here.

⁸⁵ *Baṭṭālīn*, which could have the additional connotation of "frivolous, scoffing ones".

⁸⁶ Jāḥiẓ's Khālīd b. Yazīd boasts that he has perfected the art of burrowing into people's houses, and that earlier *nagqābūn* were merely crude batterers-down of walls (*haddāmūn*), see *Kitāb al-Bukhālā'*, 50, tr. 71.

⁸⁷ *Sākantu*. Perhaps the idea is that he picks quarrels and then suddenly makes peace in order to disarm his adversary and thus achieve his original intention.

⁸⁸ *Akhḷāq al-wazīrain*, 184-5.

virtually incarcerated in his house, separated from his wife and family. The highly-sexed Aqṭa' was reduced to masturbation and, on one occasion, to hurriedly copulating with his visiting wife in the forecourt of the Ṣāhib's house, where he was not surprisingly discovered *in flagranti delicto*.⁸⁹ The Ṣāhib kept this grip on him because Aqṭa' was his supreme informant and mentor concerning the lore and language of the beggars :

Ibn 'Abbād used to learn from him the speech of the beggars and the jargon (*munāghāt*) of the persistent mendicants, the expressions of the gamblers and of those who rattle together the two dice (sc. the dice used in *nard*, backgammon), of those who are reduced to a wretched condition, who act in a blasphemous manner, who go around making snorting noises,⁹⁰ who tear up their loincloth,⁹¹ and who spit into the air.⁹² The Ṣāhib never found anybody who had such a stock of lore as al-Aqṭa' had, hence he used to keep firm hold of him.⁹³

Aqṭa' presumably acquired his other by-name of *al-Munshid* from his possession of a fine declaratory or reciting voice, and the Ṣāhib further compelled Aqṭa' to recite, in a lamentatory style, his own poetry in praise of the Alids. Aqṭa' was rewarded with a dirham for each verse which he did well, but received a blow from a knobbly stick if he recited it badly. Since his heart was not in this work, he received a lot of blows; but when Tauḥīdī remonstrated with him that it would be less painful and more lucrative if he only took the trouble to learn the poetry properly, Aqṭa' replied that it was easier to endure the blows than to bear the burden of learning the Ṣāhib's feeble and flat poetry, for, he said, "By God, his poetry on the Ahl al-Bait is pure excrement!"⁹⁴

VII

However, it is time now to revert to the specific question of Abū Dulaf's relations with the Ṣāhib, and in particular, to the passage concerning these in Tha'ālībī's *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, already mentioned

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 185, 187-8.

⁹⁰ Cf. Abū Dulaf, *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, v. 101.

⁹¹ Either in order to appear poor and ragged, or as an obscene invitation, cf. also *ibid.*, v. 54.

⁹² Cf. *ibid.*, v. 77.

⁹³ *Akhlāq al-wazīrain*, 185.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 187.

above. This passage in the chapter on the poets forming the Ṣāhib Ibn 'Abbād's circle is of supreme importance to us in that it enshrines the only surviving text of Abū Dulaf's *Qaṣīda sāsanīyya*, this last being preceded by some information on Abū Dulaf's life and work and his relations with other literary men of the age. The lines which pertain to his relations with the Ṣāhib run as follows :

A poet full of witticisms and elegant expressions, keeping his knife well sharpened in begging for gifts. He lived till almost ninety, entertaining people, wandering in distant lands, undertaking arduous journeys and striking the sides of the *mihrābs* (sc. in the mosques where he slept) with his food-bag, in the service of learning and letters. Concerning his penetrating into distant lands, Abū Dulaf writes, in some verses of his which Abū l-Faḍl al-Hamadhānī⁹⁵ recited to me

In regard to all my journeyings and encampings, God's lands have become
Jealous of my remaining and envious of my departing,

For I never alight in them but that I find there some bond of friendship with
the people (or, unless I have some bond of friendship with the people there).

He used regularly to frequent the Ṣāhib's company and prolong his stays with him, whilst he increased the crowd of his attendants and followers, attaching himself to his service and securing his daily sustenance in his household. For his journeys, he used to provide himself with letters from the Ṣāhib, and they would stir up a flow of financial drafts which would satisfy his wants. The Ṣāhib had by heart to a remarkable degree the beggars' slang (*munākāt Banī Sāsān*), and Abū Dulaf's prodigious knowledge of this jargon used to afford him great pleasure. The two of them used to bandy this slang about between themselves, and use expressions which no-one else present could comprehend. Abū Dulaf presented the Ṣāhib with a *qaṣīda* in which he imitated al-Aḥnaf al-'Ukbari's poem rhyming in *dāl* concerning this slang.⁹⁶ In it, Abū Dulaf mentioned the beggars, and made people aware of their different subdivisions and their various practices. He achieved a remarkable effect by introducing the Caliph al-Muṭi' into the beggars' ranks,⁹⁷ and he explained it all by a penetrating and exhaustive commentary. The Ṣāhib became very animated and was thrilled and delighted with it. He learned the whole of it off by heart, and rewarded him generously for it. I have set down the greater part of it later on [in this chapter].⁹⁸

There is no indication that Tha'ālibī, essentially a man of Khurasan and the east and born a generation or so later than Abū Dulaf, ever met the latter. Such a meeting would not have been chronologically impos-

⁹⁵ I.e. Badī' az-Zamān, himself treated at length in the *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, IV, 256-302.

⁹⁶ See on this, above, pp. 67-9.

⁹⁷ Cf. *Qaṣīda sāsanīyya*, vv. 110-11.

⁹⁸ *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, III, 356-7. Minorsky translates much of this passage in the Introduction to *Abū Dulaf Mis'ar ibn Muḥalhil's travels in Iran*, 9-10, averring that he had consulted many experts on Arabic over the difficulties of the text, including William Marçais, without being able to resolve all the problems in it.

ible; if Abū Dulaf was say thirty years old when he undertook his journey through Central Asia in *ca.* 940, and he lived almost till the age of ninety, he would not have died till the last decade of the century. However, Abū Dulaf's permanent base during the latter part of his life seems to have been in the Būyid dominions, whilst Tha'ālibī only left his home town of Nishapur for one extended stay elsewhere, that at the court of the Ma'mūnid Khwārazm-Shāhs of Gurgānj, and his links were with such eastern dynasties as the Samānids and Ghaznavids.⁹⁹

Tha'ālibī's information about Abū Dulaf apparently came through the intermediacy of literary men who had been members of the Ṣāhib Ibn 'Abbād's circle in Baghdad or Ray, but had subsequently moved eastwards to courts in the Caspian lands or in Khurasan and Transoxania. These connections are made explicit in the rest of Tha'ālibī's biographical and critical introduction to the text of the *Qaṣīda sāsā-niyya*, in which he cites information and verses given to him by people who had known Abū Dulaf personally, including Badi' az-Zamān al-Hamadhānī, Abū 'Alī al-Balkhī and (?) Abū l-Ḥusain 'Alī al-Hamadhānī :

As-Salāmi¹⁰⁰ satirised Abū Dulaf in some verses beginning thus :

Abu Dulaf, who is the coldest of those who have cares striking their hearts (sc. of mankind), said to us one day,

⁹⁹ For Tha'ālibī's life, see Bosworth, *The book of curious and entertaining information*, Introduction, 1 ff.

¹⁰⁰ Abū l-Ḥasan Muhammad b. 'Abdallāh as-Salāmi (336-94/948-1004) was a celebrated poet of Baghdādī origin; according to Ibn Khallikān, his *nisba* came from "Madinat as-Salām". Salāmi enjoyed the patronage first of the Ḥamdānid Abū Taghlib in Mosul, then that of the Ṣāhib Ibn 'Abbād in Jibāl, and then that of 'Aḍud ad-Daula in Shirāz. (He is to be distinguished from the Khurasanian author Abū 'Alī al-Ḥusain b. Aḥmad as-Sallāmi, author of a lost, but extensively-quoted, history of the governors of Khurāsān and mentioned briefly by Tha'ālibī in *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, IV, 95.) Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad as-Salāmi finds much more extensive treatment in *ibid.*, II, 396-431, and Ibn Khallikān devotes a biographical notice to him, quoting explicitly from Tha'ālibī (*Wafayāt al-a'yān*, IV, 403-9, tr. III, 110-14); a separate *Diwān* of his does not, however, seem to have survived. In *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, II, 401, Tha'ālibī quotes again the five verses here given of Salāmi's satire, with two slight variants and with the introductory words, "There was at the court of the Ṣāhib [Ibn 'Abbād] a shaikh called Abū Dulaf Mis'ar b. Muḥalhil al-Yanbū'ī, who used to practise there as a poet, a physician and an astrologer, and who used to envy Salāmi his elevated position at the court. He used to sneer at and harass Salāmi, and get worked up about him, till Salāmi finally silenced him by saying these verses one day ...".

"Poetry flows from me like water". I said, "The master is right, but his words act as a water-cooler".¹⁰¹

You are the master of the astrologers, but according to their judgement, you will never attain happiness;

And [you are] an experienced physician, yet a physician who does not usually enjoy success in what he practises.¹⁰²

He went to a sick man one day, and we commented, "Cheer up! You have been vouchsafed the martyr's crown!"¹⁰³

Abū Dulaf replied to him:

As-Salāmi has kept on satirising me, so I have said to him, "Love of my heart, my dear one, my master,

If you do not remember our intimacy at Ray, then remember your farting from beneath me at Baghdad".

'Aun b. al-Ḥusain al-Hamadhānī¹⁰⁴ recited to me, saying that Abū Dulaf al-Khazrajī al-Yanbū'ī recited to him a poem of his own composition concerning Abū 'Abdallāh al-'Alawī:

If it were not for the sake of the Prophet Muḥammad, and his executor (sc. 'Alī) and the pure and chaste one (sc. Fāṭima),

You would have known that I am a poet who brands men with the verses which I utter.

But I turned away from that sort of talk (but if I had in fact recited such satirical poetry, it would have been long!),

And I have left one drinking-session for another, so welcome to that potent wine!¹⁰⁵

Abū 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Balkhī¹⁰⁶ related to me and said, Abū Dulaf

¹⁰¹ I.e. Abū Dulaf boasts of the copious and mellifluous flow of his poetry, but the satirist cites his words in an ironic sense, that his poetry is an insipid as water. The double meaning of the root *barada* "it was cold" and "it was insipid, stale, unexciting", as expressed in the first verse, is carried on in the second hemistich of this next verse, where the use of *barrāda* implies that Abū Dulaf's words are flat, damping down the spirits and failing to excite the imagination.

¹⁰² I follow here the clearly preferable text of the line as given alternatively in *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, II, 401 (see n. 100 above).

¹⁰³ Salāmi's opinion of Abū Dulaf's medical skill seems to accord with that of Abū l-Faḍl b. al-'Amid as related by Tauḥidī, see above, pp. 58-60.

¹⁰⁴ This poet does not seem to appear in the *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, unless it is Abū l-Ḥusain 'Alī b. al-Ḥusain al-Ḥasanī al-Hamadhānī who is meant; this Hamadhānī was an Alid and the son-in-law of the Ṣāḥib Ibn 'Abbād, having married his only daughter, cf. *ibid.*, III, 410-12, and Yāqūt, *Irshād*, II, 328.

¹⁰⁵ With slight variants in the first verse, these four verses appear also as the sole substance of Bākhazrā's brief notice of Abū Dulaf in his *Dumyat al-qaṣr wa-'uṣrat ahl al-'aṣr*, ed. M.R. aṭ-Ṭabbākh (Aleppo 1348/1930), 16 = ed. 'A.M. al-Ḥilū (Cairo 1388-91/1968-71), I, 39.

¹⁰⁶ Briefly noticed in *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, IV, 415, as a poet who sought his fortune in Nishāpūr and who adopted the *laqab* of az-Zāhir "the shining one".

al-Khazraji recited to me one of his own poems about a man who was a secretary at Dinawar called al-Mishqa':¹⁰⁷

O you who ask me about al-Mishqa', my verses and my sheets of paper addressed to him have been wasted,

I wrote to him concerning an urgent need which had arisen for us, but it was just as if I had written to a wild beast of the plains.

What an excellent fellow he would be, if only his nature were not mingled with the pungent spices used for flavouring beer!

I would be like his kind, and of his very type, if I did not cause him to fart rhythmically.¹⁰⁸

Badi' az-Zamān recited to me some of Abū Dulaf's poetry, and in one of his *maqāmāt* he attributed it to Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Iskandarī:

Alas, the present age is a deceptive sham, so do not let the Deceiver delude you,¹⁰⁹

But put a false gloss on things, and behave in an extravagant manner; eat your fill and clear the board (?); steal, whilst wishing the person whom you are visiting long life!¹¹⁰

Do not remain in a set of circumstances, but move around, just as the nights revolve.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ The word *mishqa'* appears in Abū Dulaf's *Qaṣīda sāsāmiyya*, v. 114, where it is explained as "the foolish person who hires white clothes and puts them on".

¹⁰⁸ I.e. by putting him in the same humiliating position as is referred to in the two lines above addressed to Salāmi.

¹⁰⁹ Quoting here Qur'ān, xxxi. 33, and xxxv. 5. The general sense of these lines seems to be that since the present world is transient and illusory, one may as well take advantage of its imperfections, and act immorally and anti-socially — the opposite of the more conventional conclusion that one should withdraw as far as possible from the delusions of this world and piously prepare for the next.

¹¹⁰ *Talbiq*, i.e. say the formula *aṭāla 'lāh baqā'aka*! "May God grant you long life!"

¹¹¹ *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, III, 357-8. The first two lines of this scrap of poetry by Badi' az-Zamān are actually given also in his *Maqāma al-Qarīdiyya*, ed. Muḥammad 'Abduh (Beirut 1924), 13, who reads, however, *al-ghurūr* "deception" for *al-gharūr* at the end of the first line.

CHAPTER THREE

ABŪ DULAF'S *QASĪDA SĀSĀNIYYA*: ITS FORM AND CONTENT

The *Qasīda sāsāniyya* as we know it consists of 196 verses in the acatalectic form of the antispastic *hazaj* metre. This metre was not entirely unknown to the Jāhiliyya poets, but occurrences of it are rare.¹ It only becomes popular in the post-Islamic period, when shorter verse forms, with only two feet per hemistich, and lighter and more tripping metres like *khafīf*, *ramal* and *hazaj*, begin to be favoured by the lyrical poets of 'Umar b. Abī Rabī'a's Ḥijāzī school, in preference to the longer, more stately measures like *ṭawīl*, *kāmil*, *wāfir*, *basīṭ*, etc. In fact, it is not until the early Abbasid period and the rise of poets like Bashshār b. Burd, Abū Nuwās and Abū l-'Atāhiya, that the use of *hazaj* becomes at all frequent.² The flexibility of *hazaj* makes it almost as easy for the poet to handle as the related *rajaz* metre,³ and Abū Dulaf's use of this measure, in imitation of 'Ukbarī's now largely lost own *Qasīda sāsāniyya* (see above, pp. 68-9), together with his adoption of the easy *qāfiya* or rhyme of consonant + *rī*, allowed him considerable freedom of expression. Thus the use of this simple metre enabled him to incorporate certain rare jargon words which are apparently non-Semitic and do not fit into the scheme of Arabic metrics very well, e.g. the enigmatic terms *z.m.k.dān* and *b.r.bāzār* (vv. 46, 156), with a minimum of metrical disturbance. The fact that the *hazaj* metre allows for some five different *ziḥāfāt*,

¹ It occurs in the poem of al-Find az-Zimmānī (lived during the time of the War of Basūs) given in the *Ḥamāsa* of Abū Tammām, ed. and tr. G.W. Freytag, *Hamasa carmina* (Bonn 1828-47), I, 9-12, Eng. tr. by C.J. Lyall, *Ancient arabian poetry, chiefly pre-islamic* (London 1930), xlvii-xlviii. Anbārī quotes in four places of his commentary on the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* from a poem in *hazaj* by Abū Du'ād al-Iyādi (*floruit* at Hira in the mid-6th century), but it should be noted that there are no poems in the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* themselves in this metre (*Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, ed. and tr. Lyall [Oxford 1918-21], I, 41, 423, 587, 766).

² See Blachère, *Histoire de la littérature arabe*, III, 682-3, and the tables showing the comparative frequencies of metres in J.-C. Vadet's interesting article, "Contribution à l'histoire de la métrique arabe", *Arabica*, II (1955), 313-21.

³ *Hazaj*, *rajaz* and *ramal* make up the third of al-Khalil b. Aḥmad's famous metrical circles, see *EI*² art. "Arūd" (G. Weil),

minor alterations in the quantity of the *asbāb* syllables of the *hashw* (i.e. those parts of the hemistichs excluding the ends, where the more disturbing *'ilal* occur), further facilitated the employment of these unusual terms and allowed the poet to give full play to his erudition about the Banū Sāsān.⁴

The internal structure of the poem resembles that of the classical ode or *qaṣīda* only in its opening and closing sections. One would not in any case expect that the bizarre subject-matter would permit Abū Dulaf to reduce it to the rigidly-controlled form of the older poetic model, even had he so desired. The opening few lines (vv. 1-8) do resemble to some extent the classical *nasīb*, with its standing over the traces of the abandoned encampment and its lamenting for the departed beloved, in that Abū Dulaf expresses here his heavy-heartedness and his yearning for rest and stability after a life spent wandering all over the face of the globe.

This now merges smoothly into a passage of *fakhr*, boasting (vv. 9-23). In this, Abū Dulaf first continues his enumeration of the hardships of a wandering life, the periods of indulgence in drink and sexual excess, followed by satiety and then a plunging into more lengthy periods of hunger and deprivation. But he then goes on to vaunt his membership of the noble confraternity of beggars.

For I am one of the company of the beggar lords, the confraternity of the outstanding ones,

[One of] the Banū Sāsān, and those who have stoutly defended their group's special territory from the earliest times (vv. 9-10).

He proudly proclaims how they range in their peregrinations over the whole world, the lands of Islam and of unbelief alike, from Tangier in the farthest Maghrib to China in the east.⁵ No-one is safe from their depredations, which Abū Dulaf likens to a *jizya* or poll-tax, just as other apologists for beggars and rogues often asserted that their demands were a just recognition of what was only their due from

⁴ See Zamakhsharī, *al-Qisṭās al-mustaḳīm fī 'ilm al-'arūḍ*, ed. Bāhiya Bākir al-Ḥasani (Baghdad 1969), 156-61, and Weil, *loc. cit.*

⁵ Professor Emrys Peters suggests to me that, because of their extensive travels, their observation of men and things, and their wide range of experience of many ranks of society, members of the Banū Sāsān like Abū Dulaf must have been of considerable political use to Viziers and other great men as sources of information and intelligence; this may well have been a factor in Abū Dulaf's intimate relations with the Ṣāḥib Ibn 'Abbād.

society, a *ḥaqq*, and were not polite requests or appeals to people's voluntary charity. Other sources of the period demonstrate that material wretchedness and deprivation did not diminish the beggars' *esprit de corps* and sense of pride; according to Tha'ālibī, the beggars used to say, "We are a band of arrogant and haughty ones (*jabābira*), even if we have only a rag covering our backsides", and he quotes a popular saying about the beggars, "Head in the clouds and backside in the muddy water".⁶

Abū Dulaf in fact boasts in his poem that, included in the definition of beggars, are all the poets of the world, presumably because the typical poet wanders from court to court in search of a congenial patron and soliciting money for his productions; and all the members of Quraish and the Anṣār, presumably because they had migrated from their ancestral homes in Mecca and Medina and had spread out all over the Islamic world. Judging by the admiring comment of Tha'ālibī when he is discussing Abū Dulaf's relations with the Ṣāḥib b. 'Abbād, that Abū Dulaf "achieved a remarkable effect (*tanādara*) by introducing the Caliph al-Muṭī' into the beggars' ranks" (see above, p. 76), this inclusion of the Abbasid was regarded as a brilliant stroke, and not in any sense as an act of *lèse-majesté*; it was undeniably true that, as the dependant of the Būyid Amīrs Mu'izz ad-Daula, and latterly of 'Izz ad-Daula Bakhtiyār, al-Muṭī' was for all practical purposes a suppliant for his daily bread (vv. 108-11).

With verse 24, "If you ask me about them, a knowledgeable one [sc. Abū Dulaf himself] can give you full information", the poet puts himself forward as the expositor of the wiles of the various classes of beggars and rogues. His poem can therefore be taken in a didactic sense as a warning against these swindlers and tricksters, as Jaubārī in the 7th/13th century avowed was his aim in the *Kashf al-asrār* (see below. p. 107). In reality, there is no doubt that Abū Dulaf's purpose

⁶ *Kitāb at-Tamthīl wa-l-muḥādara*, 200. Other fragments of *fakhr* poetry by Abū Dulaf, on the themes of his relentless travelling, his fortitude in enduring hardship and his deliberate choice of the wandering life over one of ease, are cited by Abū Ḥayyān at-Tauḥīdī in his *Kitāb al-Baṣā'ir wa-dh-dhakḥā'ir*, one fragment being cast in a distinctly Mutanabbī-esque mould:

I am the voyager by night, the traveller on horseback (*ibn al-lail wa-l-kha'il*),
one who will encamp for a while and then ride away,

And I am one who fights valiantly to the death against the champions of war,
one who is always ready to shoulder heavy burdens.
(*ibid.*, II, 637, cf. also III, 526, 648).

was not instruction, but pure entertainment and the displaying of his own intimate knowledge of these curious aspects of human behaviour. Far from being condemnatory, as is Jaubarī with his warnings to the general public at the end of each section in his book that they should take note and avoid the swindles just exposed, Abū Dulaf takes up an ostensibly neutral stance, making no pronouncement on the morality or otherwise of the beggars' actions, but implicitly praising them for their ingenuity and their persistence in wheedling money. Occasionally he becomes explicit. Thus he calls the *musta'riḍūn*, those beggars who arouse the sympathies of their hearers by relating heart-rending tales of misfortune and who make their tears flow by means of artificial inducements, "the real aristocracy among the beggars", *umarā' al-qaum* (variant, "the most skilful among the beggars", *amhar al-qaum*) (v. 67). Likewise, the *zakūriyyūn*, those who beg from door-to-door with bags for collecting scraps of food, are described as "some of those with the highest prestige", *min ajillā'ihim* (v. 78). The activities of the beggar chiefs, who stupefy the young apprentice beggars with drugged food or an excess of wine and then commit homosexual assaults on them (vv. 115-20), incur no breath of condemnation; nor do the disgusting personal habits of some beggars, even in sacred premises like mosques (vv. 133-4, 165), elicit any word of criticism.

The body of the poem, then, comprises a catalogue of the different types of beggar and their roguish activities (vv. 25-160), with Abū Dulaf as the dispassionate narrator. It begins with a frank avowal of the beggars' degenerate sexual proclivities, in particular, of the sodomites and masturbators amongst them who prefer these outlets because, amongst other things, they thereby avoid the inconvenience of getting a woman pregnant and having to marry her and hand over a dowry, or because they do not need to desist when a woman is involved in her menstrual periods (vv. 25-9). These arguments can be paralleled elsewhere by the words of one Qāḍī al-Āfiya, quoted by ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī. When this Qāḍī was asked why he preferred a boy over a slavegirl, he replied, "because the boy isn't defiled by menstruation nor put out of action by becoming pregnant!" (*lā yaḥīḍu wa-lā yabīḍu*).⁷ From another anecdote given by this same author, it appears that intercrural sexual congress (*al-ityān bain al-*

⁷ This phrase is a euphemistic cliché of the time, cf. Tha'ālibī's citation of poetry containing it in his *Kitāb al-Kināya wa-t-ta'rīḍ* (Cairo 1326/1908), 26.

fakhidhain, *tafkhīdh*) was commended because the greater ablution (*ghusl*), required after full sexual congress, was not obligatory after it.⁸

Abū Dulaf is much concerned with the subterfuges and devices of the beggars whereby they excited the compassion and the alms of those whom they accosted. The ways of simulating physical and mental disabilities in many cases parallel those enumerated by Jāhīz and Baihaqī, see above, pp. 36 ff. Feigned madmen wear iron charms and amulets round their necks, or else they shave off their beards and rend their clothes (vv. 30-1, 66). Beggars who simulate internal wounds secrete eggs in their bosoms which they surreptitiously press and make a pus-like discharge come out, or else they insert substances into their anuses which ooze out again as a morbid discharge (vv. 35, 53), rather like the *filaur* of Jāhīz and the *hājūr* of Baihaqī who simulate an anal prolapse and haemorrhoids, see above pp. 38, 44-5.

Exterior malformations and skin infections can be produced by blowing air into one's body in order to inflate it, or by tying a towel so tightly round the neck that the face grows black and distorted and the eyes pop out of their sockets; and an ulcerated skin can be induced by rubbing a mixture of gum arabic, gum tragacanth and dragon's blood over it, causing pustules to erupt (vv. 54, 115 and commentary). Those who feign blindness and deafness are mentioned (vv. 25, 51), without any details being given of the actual tricks involved, as they are, for instance, given by Jaubarī, see below p. 112. But Abū Dulaf does mention that beggars are able to induce a flow of tears by smearing their eyes with olive oil, and that a beggar woman may bind up her eyes and claim that she is one-eyed or else afflicted by ophthalmia, the trick being called that of (or the woman herself being called, the text of the commentary being here somewhat ambiguous) the *ṣaqr* "falcon" or *baghla* "she-mule" (vv. 67, 126 and commentary). Apparent maltreatment by bandits or by supernatural agents like the Jinn is effected by slashing the body with a razor, or blackening the skin with sesame oil, or by simulating a violent palsy and trembling (vv. 36, 121). A similar condition of bodily paralysis or hemiplegia can be produced also, including by means of the beggar woman or the trick called the *bāz* "hawk"; whether these effects were pure simulation or whether they were the result of actual mutilation of the body,

⁸ *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*, II, 144, 149. Passion for boys was regarded as a special vice of *qāḍīs*, the example of al-Ma'mūn's Chief Qāḍī Yahyā b. Aktham, a notorious pederast, being frequently cited in the literature; see Mez, *Die Renaissance des Islāms*, 213, tr. 223.

as practiced by Jāḥiẓ's *musha'ib*, see above, pp. 37-8, is unclear (vv. 47, 126). Thus it is uncertain whether the *miṭrāsh*, who displayed his hacked-off stump of a hand, has cut it off himself in order to acquire a good pretext for begging, or has been the innocent victim in some accident or spot of violence. (v. 47).

The favoured haunts of the beggars were naturally the centres of population, sc. the towns, where on the whole more people lived above subsistence level than in the countryside and were thus more inclined towards almsgiving and compassion, and where the beggars could perform their tricks before a maximum audience. Abū Dulaf describes how some beggars work systematically from door-to-door. One class of beggar sets out just before dawn in order to catch people going off to work or in a suitable frame of mind for starting the day by an act of charity (the *mughallis*, cf. Baihaqī's *saḥarī*, above p. 43); another class of them goes forth at the end of the day, especially during the period between the sunset and the evening prayers (the *'ishā'ān*), when people are cooking their dinner at the end of the day's work and are ready to hand out some scraps of food (the *musta'shī*, cf. Jāḥiẓ's *'awwā*, above p. 39 (vv. 34, 55)). The class of beggars called *zakūriyyūn* or *muzakkirūn* goes round with special bags for the food which they collect (v. 78).

The roadsides and the markets, with all their life and movement, and their perpetual concourses of people, were favoured places for attracting an audience or else for simple pocket-picking and shoplifting, as was practiced by the *muna'is* who prowled round the stalls of the markets, stealing an odd nut or date or fig (v. 34). Others sought money by performing small services for the passers-by, such as sprinkling rose water over them, burning sweet-smelling incense, providing drinking water, or throwing down rosary beads, pieces of halva, salt, etc. (vv. 39, 50, 73). For some beggars, the streets and markets were their only homes, and they found what shelter they could there from the weather and the dust (v. 48). All Islamic towns must have had a stratum of the homeless and wholly destitute at the very bottom of their social structure; this class would sleep rough in the streets, in ruinous buildings, on the raised platforms of the mosques (*maṣāṭib*), etc. (vv. 144-5). In cold weather, the stokeholds of baths, bakehouses, brick kilns and similar places were favoured spots where the destitute and the beggars huddled for warmth, not infrequently rolling in the very ashes themselves; both the beggars in Abū Dulaf's poem, vv. 56, 135-6, 160 commentary, and Gharīb, principal character in Muḥammad

b. Dāniyāl's shadow play '*Ajīb wa-Gharīb*', see below pp. 121 ff., are described as streaked and stained with soot and ash so that they look like the panther with his mottled coat. Beggars even penetrated into the baths proper, and begged from the bathers.⁹

Mosques and their ancillary buildings were attractive to beggars for the obvious reason that piety usually involved charity also; the manuals of *ḥisba*, as we saw above, frequently contain instructions to the *muḥtasib* and his staff to keep mosques and public places clear of importunate beggars. The beggars for their part had no compunction whatever about making nuisances of themselves in the mosques, swaggering and roistering about in an unseemly and immodest fashion (vv. 140-2); selling small objects of religious veneration, such as rosary beads and little clay tablets, allegedly made with earth from the tomb of al-Ḥusain b. 'Alī at Karbalā', for presentation or sale to the Shī'a in particular (vv. 60, 85); and even creating a deliberate disturbance during the prayers by shouting out (as does the *muzaqqī*) or by farting loudly (like the *mufashshish*) until the scandalised worshippers give them money to go away (vv. 52-3).

In semi-rural small towns and villages, the threshing floors and other places where agricultural operations were carried out, were much frequented by beggars with their collecting bags; armed with bowls, brooms and sieves, they would gather up the sweepings, siftings and winnowings at these locations. (vv. 122-3). They would similarly comb the countrysides, plying their trade in the villages, and often collecting such a rich haul of scraps of food, cloth, etc. that they would have to hire porters to transport for them the day's takings (vv. 90, 143).

In mediaeval Islam, as in neighbouring societies and cultures like the Christian and Indian ones, religion was recognised as a useful cloak for begging; indeed, it ranked as the most potent single means for loosening the purse-strings of the credulous. Abū Dulaf accordingly records several practices which come under this heading. A familiar figure on the margins of the Islamic world was the *ghāzī*, the volunteer fighter for the faith. Whilst there remained a *Dār al-Ḥarb* whose population had, according to strict Islamic law, to be summoned to Islam and then either fought into a state of submission or else exterminated, there were always opportunities for garrison service in the frontier fortresses or *ribāṭs* and for participation in raids against the infidels.

⁹ Jāḥiẓ, cited by Tha'ālibī, *Bard al-akbād fī l-ā'dād*, 131, l. 10.

These opportunities probably acted as a certain safety valve for tensions within Islamic society, providing an outlet for the energies of bold and restless spirits. Hence we find mediaeval Muslims who were characterised by that combination of savage bellicosity and extravagant piety which we find amongst the Christians who participated in the Crusades of the Levant, in the Spanish Reconquista and in wars against the pagan Slavs of eastern Europe.¹⁰

When the vigorous Byzantine Emperors of the Macedonian dynasty mounted an offensive against Muslim northern Syria and al-Jazīra in the 4th/10th and 5th/11th centuries, the Muslims were faced with a new political and legal phenomenon. Lands which had for long been *Dār al-Islām* reverted to the infidels and became *Dār al-Ḥarb* once more, with a consequent influx of Muslim refugees from the frontier regions. Hence the guise of the escaped captive (Abū Dulaf's *bānuwānī*, v. 59, cf. the *shajawī* of Baihaqī, above pp. 43-4) and that of the refugee were excellent ones for the beggars to adopt, being pitiable conditions well calculated to touch the hearts of the faithful. Abū Dulaf mentions also in this connection the *maisarānī* who collects money, ostensibly for holy war on the frontiers; the trickster who swallows his tongue and indicates to people that the Greeks have cut it out (*man makḥṭara*); and the *maṣṭabāniyyūn* who go round begging on the pretext of getting money to ransom their families, left behind in the hands of the Byzantines (vv. 37-8, 44-5). (Jāḥiẓ mentions the swindler who swallows his tongue under the designation of the *m.kh.ṭ.rānī*, presumably *makḥṭarānī*, but writing as he did in the mid-3rd/9th century, before the Byzantine revanche, the perpetrators of this mutilation are alleged to be Bābak and his Khurramī heretic followers, and their victim a muezzin, see above p. 36; Baihaqī's *zūkaim al-Ḥabasha* is a *ghāzī* just back from the frontier and appealing for funds, but no specific frontier is mentioned, unless the component *Ḥabasha* in this puzzling name refers to operations against the Nubians in Upper Egypt or against the Ethiopians proper from such Islamic bridgeheads as Aden, the Dahlak Islands and Massawa, see above, p. 46.)

As mentioned above, some beggars gain a living by peddling small

¹⁰ The absence of any extensive research on the general topic of the *ghāzīs* and the *ribāṭs* is a serious gap in our knowledge of mediaeval Islamic life; unfortunately, no works seem to have been specifically composed on the lines of an *Adab al-ghāzī* or *Adab al-murābiṭ*, although the fairly numerous manuals for would-be Ṣūfīs, ascetics, etc. may well contain incidental information on these questions.

objects of religious veneration, such as the *munfidh at-tīn* and his clay tablets allegedly made with earth from the tomb of the Shī'ī Imām al-Ḥusain b. 'Alī (v. 60). Others seek money by asserting a special claim to people's charity as the descendants of a client of the Prophet; by claiming membership of certain sectarian groups like the extremist Shī'ī Kaisāniyya and thus appealing to these schismatics' generosity; and by stirring up the emotions of the Shī'a in general by declaiming poetry and telling stories about the sufferings of the Alids, or conversely by dwelling on the virtues of Sunni heroes like the Caliphs Abū Bakr and 'Umar and thus gaining the charity of the Sunnis (vv. 50, 62-6, 125).

Many beggars lead the people to believe that their ragged and coarse clothing are the marks of religious ascetics and holy men, and that they are fasting and mortifying the flesh (vv. 42-3, 131-2, 135). They often adopt the rôles of *wā'iz* and *mudhakkir*, relating traditions from the Prophet and the early Muslims and preaching threatening sermons against sexual vice, drunkenness and other sins — in all of which they are themselves frequent indulgers (vv. 56, 124). But when they meet genuine holy men and religious dignitaries, they treat them with contempt, and heap insults and abuse on them (vv. 170-2). In addition to this role of hell-fire preacher, the profession of *qāṣṣ* or popular story teller is one in which the beggars exhibit their ingenuity and persuasiveness in wheedling money out of an audience. One trick associated with the circles of the story tellers is for them to plant an accomplice in the listening crowd (the *mukawwiz*); the speaker then exhorts his audience to give the deserving fellow money (v. 32; cf. the *kān* of Baihaqī, the confederate of the *qāṣṣ*, with whom the proceeds collected are later shared out, above p. 45). The stories retailed by these *quṣṣāṣ* with a wealth of corroborative detail and verisimilitude, ranged over the entire stock of Near Eastern popular romance and legend, and Abū Dulaf specifically mentions those stories which are concerned with the history and lore of the Jews and Christians (the *Isrā'iliyyāt*).¹¹ Often these are served up as short, snappy anecdotes or tales (*shibriyyāt*, literally "just a span [*shibr*] in length"), in order to avoid longueurs and a possible loss of attention by the audience (v. 41). Well calculated to touch the hearts of the Muslim faithful is the guise of the convert

¹¹ The fact that *isrā'iliyyāt* was used as a general term for all non-Islamic, extraneous elements entering the spheres of ḥadīth and Qur'ānic *tafsīr*, is emphasised by Ramzī Na'nā'a, *al-Isrā'iliyyāt wa-atharuhā fī kutub at-tafsīr* (Damascus-Beirut 1390/1970), 72-5.

to Islam from the People of the Book. The swindler posing thus, the *qannā'* or *muqanwin*, may give out that he has come to see the light because of a vision of the Prophet summoning him to the true faith; such a person can naturally claim to be an expert on the Jewish or Christian scriptures and thus make his stories and sermons sound more plausible and better-informed (vv. 49, 59).¹² The pretence of the destitute pilgrim, unable to fulfil his vow unless he can beg more funds, is familiar from Jāḥiẓ and his *muqaddis*, see above p. 40. An interesting variation on this trick recorded by Abū Dulaf concerns the group of beggars who attach themselves to pilgrim caravans (the *mu'āfirūn*) and then strike a bargain with those pilgrims whose spirits and religious enthusiasm are flagging that they will, in return for a sum of money, perform the Pilgrimage in their stead, with the merit for the act accruing to the original pilgrim; the obvious inference is that the *mu'āfirūn* then decamp with the money (vv. 80-2). That other stratagems were used to despoil pilgrims of their wealth appears from Abū Dulaf's mention of the *muzankil* who preys on pilgrims, though the exact nature of his trickery is not specified (v. 51).

Another sphere of activity in which the Banū Sāsān were everywhere prominent was that of the mountebanks and charlatans of every variety — astrologers, jugglers, conjurors, druggists, quack doctors and dentists, etc. — and Abū Dulaf has much information about these types. Belief in the influence of the stars and in the power of magically-gifted persons to affect the course of events was well-nigh universal in mediaeval Islam. Hence the astrologers and horoscope-casters could always be sure of eager audiences. Abū Dulaf calls the circle of these tricksters the *hādḥūr*, and describes how, by placing confederates in the crowd of onlookers, they can get the gullible to come forward and lay out their money (vv. 57-8). The astrologers include in their ranks those who specialise in making prognostications about people's futures and careers (the *qāfat ar-rizq*) or in the interpretation of omens and auguries (the *ahl al-fa'l wa-z-zajr*), and their techniques include the use of astrological tables (*zīj*), pyromancy and the interpretation of the *jafr*, apocalyptic sayings and prophecies (vv. 88-9). Of the same ilk as these astrologers are the *mushaqqifūn*, those who

¹² An examination of Jewish strains, in particular, amongst the activities of the rogues and beggars of the mediaeval Islamic period is given in the paper of Bosworth, "Jewish elements in the Banū Sāsān", to appear in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Jewish Communities in Muslim Lands, Jerusalem 1974*.

mystify their audience by demonstrating the use of secret writing and by making it re-appear (v. 61), and the very numerous Sāsānis concerned with the production of amulets and charms against the evil eye and suchlike misfortunes. The generic title which Abū Dulaf gives to these amulet-makers is *muḥarriz* "he who writes out *aḥrāz*, sing. *ḥirz*". In Ibn Dāniyāl's *ʿAjīb wa-Gharīb*, on the other hand, we have the name 'Awwādh ash-Sharmāt given to the writer of amulets (see below, p. 128); the latter component of this name nevertheless appears in Abū Dulaf's poem, v. 76, in the shape of the verb *sarmata*, also *qarmata*, "he copied out a charm". A specialist within the general class is the *ḥāfir at-tarsh* who mass-produces charms by making a mould or matrix for them whilst continuing to let people believe that they are individually hand-made (v. 74).

The quack doctors and dentists supplied what modicum of medical and dental care the overwhelming mass of population was ever likely to enjoy, for the more sophisticated physicians proper, learned in Hippocrates, Galen, Dioscorides and the other Greek fathers of the profession, were few enough in number to command lucrative practices amongst the ruling and upper classes. For the rest of the people, there were only the quacks, whose methods probably remained essentially the same from Abū Dulaf's time down to the beginning of our present century. Certainly, the standard of medical care in the *Rif* of Egypt, as revealed by the Egyptian physician and graduate of the Kasr el-Aini medical school 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Ismā'il in his book *Tibb ar-rukka* "Old wives' medicine",¹³ shows no significant advance on the methods of Abū Dulaf's charlatans. Amongst the quacks in Abū Dulaf's poem are mentioned the *mudakkik*, who practices firstly as an osteopath and manipulator of contorted limbs, and secondly as one who treats aching teeth by pretending to extract worms from them (rather as 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Ismā'il's *dawwāda* "worm extractor" supposedly extracts worms from the forehead or eye);¹⁴ and the *barkak(k)*, a dentist pure and simple who extracts teeth (vv. 40, 75). The doctors and surgeons have with them, like Ibn Dāniyāl's Miqdām al-Āsī (see below, p. 127), a terrifying collection of instruments, hooks, lancets, etc., and claim to give treatment for ophthalmia, defective sight, etc., as well as to supply drugs for such purposes as fattening

¹³ Tr. by J. Walker as *Folk-medicine in modern Egypt* (London 1934); the original work appeared in two slim volumes at Cairo in 1310-12/1892-4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 58-9.

up women, relieving toothache and curing dysentery (vv. 75, 99, 105-6).

The class of popular entertainers included redoubtable snake-handlers who do, however, notes Abū Dulaf, take the precaution of removing most of the poisonous fangs from their vipers (vv. 92-5); trainers of wild animals, such as lions, tigers, bears, monkeys, etc. (vv. 103-4); and those who perform spectacular tricks like escaping from bonds and chains in a Houdini-like fashion (the *mufakkik*), grinding up hard objects like date stones or pieces of iron and glass in their hands or or teeth, juggling with water pots, walking on tightropes (like Ibn Dāniyāl's Ḥassūn al-Mauzūn, see below, p. 127) and climbing up ropes thrown over pulleys (vv. 40, 112, 127-8).

When one studies the phenomenon of begging in various societies and at various times, one is inevitably struck by the tendency of beggars to coalesce into groups organised against the outside world, that of the non-beggars (in the terminology of both Abū Dulaf and Ṣafī d-Dīn, the *akhshān*, sing. *khushnī*). This tendency, with its resultant forms of corporate organisation and even of hierarchy, and its special jargons, has already been mentioned, above p. 4. There remains to be seen what evidence one can deduce from Abū Dulaf's poem about formal organisation amongst the beggars: did any such groupings exist in his time? Scattered references in Abū Ḥayyan at-Tauhīdī's works indicate that beggars congregated in favoured spots like the *maṣṭabas* of mosques in Ray, and this is confirmed by Abū Dulaf's own poem; but such informal gatherings are not the same as say the beggars' brotherhoods of Elizabethan England, whose approach could throw a town into panic. Yet Abū Dulaf's poem does seem to point to a certain degree of formal organisation and hierarchy within certain sections of the Banū Sāsān.

The fact that beggars may operate together because an accomplice is necessary for working a particular trick, is mentioned more than once by Abū Dulaf. The astrologers who form a circle, *hādhūr*, for the exploitation of the gullible, are called a *qaum* or group (v. 57, commentary). The pseudo-*ghāzīs*, having collected a good haul on pretext of going off on *jihād*, divide it out in a special place called the *qainūn*, but beggars who have merely collected scraps of food at random may also divide out their spoils with companions (vv. 38, 42). Elsewhere Abū Dulaf speaks of the beggars taking over premises and using them as storeplaces (*anābīr*, sing. *anbār*) for their takings; in return for the use of these, they pay a share of the takings to the owner, or to

the stoker of the bath or furnace if they utilise such a place. Inside their *anābīr*, they divide up what they have collected into piles of each individual commodity and then share it out amongst themselves (vv. 157-60).

There is, moreover, some reference by Abū Dulaf to a more formal organisation amongst certain beggars, involving master beggars (*bahālīl*, sing. *buhlūl*, cf. vv. 9, 120) and apprentices or beggar boys. The *qaum shuṭṭār* "group of rowdies and evil-doers" hold that the master-boy relationship is an ideal one for their nefarious trade; hence, in a Fagin-like manner, they educate and train in their ways (*yurabbūn wa-yufattūn*) young boys (v. 87). Explicitly connected with the beggar leaders of the Arabs (*al-'Arab min al-mukaddīn*) is the system of attaching a young and beardless beggar youth to an older, experienced beggar, it being part of the code of practice for youths (*futuwwa*) that they should not go around begging by themselves, but should act as assistants, rather like a knight in mediaeval Christendom and his squire. But that the relationship was not purely a professional one, aimed at furthering the trade of begging, is shown by the second hemistich of the verse in which this process of training youths, *tarbiya wa-taṭfiya*, is mentioned; this hemistich seems to mean that the beggar leaders unloose the fastenings of the boys' garments for sexual purposes (v. 87). It was an argument of certain mediaeval Islamic writers that a slave boy was superior to a slave girl, because apart from personal companionship and sexual gratification, the former provided professional assistance.¹⁵ The homosexual aspect of the relationship between master beggar and beggar youth is perfectly explicit in vv. 115-20 of Abū Dulaf's poem, which describe how the *shaudhar* or beardless youth (= *amrad*) is knocked out by a drugged stew or by being plied with wine until he is totally stupefied or drunk, in which state the beggar leaders successively rape him.

The venue for these distasteful happenings is the "house of the beggar youths", *dār al-fityān* (v. 115, commentary), presumably the same as the "beggars' house", *dār al-qaum*, mentioned elsewhere as having

¹⁵ Ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī relates that Abū Muslim (the organiser of the Abbasid Revolution in Persia) was once asked why he preferred the *ghulām* to the *jāriya*; he answered that "the slave boy is a companion on the road, ■ commensal at the table, and a personal solace in one's periods of privacy" (*Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*, II, 144). In the later source of 'Alā' ad-Dīn 'Alī b. 'Abdallāh al-Ghuzūlī's *Maṭālī' al-budūr fī manāzil as-surūr* (Cairo 1299-1300/1882-3), I, 246, this dictum is attributed to one Muslim al-Aṣfarī, and a similar saying by the *mājin* poet Wāliba b. al-Ḥubāb is also cited.

its own raised platform, the *maṣṭabat al-fityān*, where soup was prepared and then sold to sick and ailing comrades (v. 91, cf. also vv. 167-8). Whether the mention of such a house implies permanent premises, or merely use of some convenient building, an empty or ruinous house, caravanserai, etc., is unknown. The latter alternative would seem more probable, in the light of the beggars' use of temporary storehouses, *anābīr*, mentioned above, and of the fact that the beggars were essentially transients and vagabonds, passing from place to place wherever the pickings promised to be richest. The general impression from Abū Dulaf's poem nevertheless remains that, although beggars were peripatetic and individualistic in their general habits, there did arise amongst them some organisational groupings, in particular, the master beggar-apprentice relationship, a form of dependence familiar enough in other spheres of Islamic society (e.g. the relationship of the *shaikh* or *pīr* to the *murīd* or novice in the Ṣūfī orders as they came to be constituted after Abū Dulaf's time).

Finally, one can glean one or two facts from the poem about the ethnic composition of the beggars known to Abū Dulaf. We would expect that the profession of mendicancy, being one of universal attraction, would include elements from all the races making up the mosaic of Islamic society, and this must have been true. Specifically, Abū Dulaf was writing in the Iraqi-Persian milieu, the lands of the Būyid Amīrs, so that one would expect mention of both the Arab and the Iranian elements; this is in fact what we find. Non-Arabs are mentioned, such as the three beggars of v. 83, Shaikh Ḥafṣūnī, Yaḥyā and Abū Zakr, described in the commentary as a non-Arabic speaking *qarum Nabat wa-'Ajam*, i.e. Syriac speakers from the ancient Aramaic culture regions of Iraq and Syria, plus Persians. It has been noted in connection with the information of Jāḥiẓ and Baihaqī on rogues and beggars that the personal names and gentilics given in these sources show a distinct bias towards the eastern Islamic world, but this probably simply reflects the residence of the authors in Persian-facing Iraq at a time when the symbiotic process of the intermingling of the Arabic and the Iranian cultures was particularly strong. Later authors like Jaubārī and Ibn Dāniyāl wrote in the Syro-Egyptian region at a time when cultural and political predominance in the Islamic world had moved westwards from Iraq to these countries, and the names of their characters and of their types of rogue are purely Arabic.

Specially mentioned by Abū Dulaf are the Kābulis, perhaps in this context Indians in general, who acted as jugglers, prestidigitateurs,

etc. (v. 127), and Zanj and Zuṭṭ who were robbers and desperadoes (v. 129), the last two races being mentioned in the same connection by Jāḥiẓ, see above, p. 34. There were, however, pure Arabs amongst the beggars, as appears from the passage cited above about the beggar leaders of the Arabs. It was, furthermore, presumably *ḥadarī* Arabs, of urban or rural origin, who were near enough ethnically and culturally to the Bedouins of the desert for them to talk and act like Bedouins in order to solicit alms (vv. 50-1), perhaps exercising here the mimicry skills of the *ḥākīya* (see above, p. 20).

The closing section (vv. 173-96) expresses Abū Dulaf's *Weltschmerz*, and its prevailing mood is one of resignation to the vicissitudes of fate which, the poet says, may bring him to the place where he is finally to settle down either rich and successful or penniless and wretched. The literary level of the poetry rises considerably here, with the transition to a more poetic theme, and there are some fine lines (e.g. v. 177 and the final lines, vv. 189 ff.). Noteworthy is Abū Dulaf's comparison of himself in his wanderings with the Sayyids, descendants of 'Alī, who became scattered over the face of the Islamic world as a result of persecution; and in vv. 184-8 a catalogue of the shrines of Shī'ī and other pietist martyrs in rehearsed. These lines raise the question of whether Abū Dulaf was himself a Shī'ī. It would not be strange if someone with a probably Arabian background should be a Shī'ī, for both moderate Shī'ism, in the Zaidī form for instance, and extremist Shī'ism in the shape of the Carmathian sect, had become firmly established in the peninsula by the beginning of the 4th/10th century. And of course, Abū Dulaf spent much of his time at the courts of the Būyid Amīrs, who did much to further the cause of Shī'ism within their dominions.¹⁶ But at this time, when Shī'ism was still a comparatively amorphous trend of thought and feeling rather than a rigidly-defined theological movement, it was quite possible to have an emotional sympathy for the Alids and their sufferings without being a thoroughgoing Shī'ī, one who cursed the first three Patriarchal Caliphs and who preached the necessity of unquestioning obedience to the Imām of the age. All we can say is that there does not seem to be any clear evidence, here in the *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya* or in any other of his works, concerning Abū Dulaf's sectarian beliefs, but that he was an adherent of the Shī'a remains a possibility.

¹⁶ See on this process, Busse, *Chalif und Grosskönig, die Buyiden im Iraq (945-1055)*, 418 ff., and Cahen, *EI*² art. "Buwayhids".

An important question which requires discussion is that of the state of the text of the poem and its commentary as we possess them today. The manuscripts used for reconstructing a critical text are discussed in Part Two, Ch. VII. The heading of the *Qaṣida sāsāniyya* as given by Tha'ālibī in the *Yatīmat ad-dahr* reads, "This is what I have selected (*ikhtartuhu*) from the *Qaṣida sāsāniyya* ..." The inference is that Tha'ālibī does not give the whole of the poem's text, an impression confirmed by certain syntactic awkwardnesses in the order of the verses at some points, e.g. at vv. 96-7 and 117 (see the comments on the respective verses in Part Two, Ch. VII). The Manisa manuscript contains an extra verse (v. 173) absent from all the other manuscripts used and from the printed editions. There are signs, too, that Tha'ālibī may have cited the commentary selectively. If Abū Dulaf's own commentary was "penetrating and exhaustive" (above, p. 76), it seems incredible that we possess no gloss at all on an enigmatic word like *z.m.kdān* (v. 46) or a whole cryptic verse like v. 166. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that Tha'ālibī did not have in his hands the complete poem and the complete commentary as Abū Dulaf wrote them, even though he was writing only a generation or so after Abū Dulaf's death; possibly the literary men whom he quotes as having known Abū Dulaf personally, such as Badī' az-Zamān al-Hamadhānī, were channels of information for him.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE BANŪ SĀSĀN IN THE PERIOD AFTER ABŪ DULAF

I

The various classes of rogues and tricksters whom one meets in writers like Jāḥiẓ, Baihaqī and Abū Dulaf are in large measure universal types. As we have seen from our glances at the comparable literature from 16th century England and Germany, they can be expected to crop up at all times and in all places; indeed, the modern traveller in the Middle East can still see many vestiges of their characteristic practices. On the other hand, language is in a continuous state of evolution and decay, the *kaun wa-fasād* of Islamic philosophers, and one would expect that the jargons and secret languages of the Muslim underworld would change almost completely over the ages; selected developments in this linguistic field are in fact surveyed in chapter VI below. Yet against the working-out of this evolutionary process of language within the Islamic world, one can to some extent set the conservative nature of Islamic culture and society, which has acted as a brake; it is doubtless the existence of this conservative counter-current which has favoured the persistence of certain terms mentioned by Abū Dulaf some four or five centuries at least after his own time (see below, pp. 175-6). The high seriousness which was the hallmark of what the Muslims considered to be "real literature" militated against themes from low life ever finding universal acceptance within the framework of Islamic literature. Yet human curiosity about the pageant of the Banū Sāsān and their extravagances persisted, and in the post-Mongol period, one finds in the work of authors like Jaubari, Muḥammad b. Dāniyāl and Ṣafī d-Dīn materials for the study of the Banū Sāsān comparable to that of the period of florescence of Abbasid civilisation.

One literary form by means of which the tricks of rogues and beggars could find a respectable niche in Arabic literature (and from that, in other Middle Eastern literatures like those of Persian, Turkish, Syriac and Hebrew) was that of the *maqāma*, a genre which appears in the 4th/10th century. The question of the origins of the *maqāma* has much exercised western scholars, perhaps because the *maqāma* seems to be a minor genre of mediaeval Arabic literature with some

roots in the pre-Islamic Hellenistic world, and because it seems to approach in some measure the dramatic form so prominent in western European literatures (in fact, the classical *maqāma* was a dead end, a “morne marécage” in William Marçais’s phrase,¹ and the drama in modern Arabic literature is a creation *de novo* under palpable European influence).

This topic of the origins of the *maqāma* can only be touched on briefly here, but the question is of relevance in that the *maqāma* developed at the same time as other early literature on the Banū Sāsān. Adam Mez distinguished the pre- and early Islamic *maqām*, the transaction of some business by a group or the delivery of a speech to a group from a standing position (the opposite of *majlis* “session”), from the 4th/10th century literary genre of the *maqāma*, the harangue or speech, usually in pursuit of money, and arising from the practices of beggars and of popular preachers and story tellers like the *mudhak-kirūn* and *quṣṣāṣ*: hence the *maqām* is *Versammlung*, the *maqāma* is *Ansprache*.² W.J. Prendergast, in the Introduction to his translation of Badī’ az-Zamān’s *maqāmāt*, gave several quotations, from the Jāhili poet Zuhair onwards, illustrating the meaning of *maqāmāt* = “meetings where people stood to deliberate over problems or to hear some oration delivered” and showing the persistence of the word in this sense even in the 4th/10th century, so that Abū ‘Alī Ismā‘il b. al-Qāsim al-Qālī, author of the anthology *al-Amālī* (d. 356/965) could still equate *maqāma* with *majlis*, i.e. an assembly of people.³

G.E. von Grunebaum accepted that the literary *maqāma* (*Standpredigt*) had no obvious pre-Islamic roots, and like Mez he emphasised the contribution of the story tellers and the Ṣūfī preachers and also that of the Greek mimes and diatribes, the survival of whose practitioners in early Islamic times and in the coastal towns of the Levant at least, was demonstrated by Horovitz in his *Spuren griechischer Mimen im Orient*. Regarding the transformation of the *maqāma* from these rather shady origins into a high art form, Von Grunebaum noted that “patronage of the popular milieu has always remained the domain of the sophisticated and erudite”, a fact that is confirmed for us by

¹ “Quelques observations sur le texte du *Kitāb el-Buḥalā’* (le Livre des Avarès) d’el-Ġāhiz”, *Mélanges René Basset* (Paris 1923-5), II, 435.

² *Abulḥāsim, ein bagdāder Sittenbild*, Introd., XXIII-XXIV, cf. Horovitz, *Spuren griechischer Mimen im Orient*, 21.

³ *The Maqāmāt of Badī’ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī*, 11-14.

the patronage of the Ṣāhib b. ‘Abbād of characters like Abū Dulaf, ‘Ukbarī and al-Aqṭa’ al-Kūfī, and the Ṣāhib’s part in stimulating Abū Dulaf to write his *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*.⁴ R. Blachère and P. Masnou, in the most extensive and percipient analysis of Badi’ az-Zamān’s *maqāmāt*, their antecedents, contemporary setting, successors, etc., which has yet appeared, emphasised Badi’ az-Zamān’s clear debt to the 4th/10th century atmosphere of interest in the underworld, and especially, to the *mukaddūn* or fraudulent beggars and the sham ascetics and Ṣūfis, their tricks and their jargon. They also decisively refuted a theory propagated by D.S. Margoliouth⁵ that the direct forerunner of the *maqāmāt* were forty (*sic*) tales full of strange and uncouth words and meanings and allegedly composed by the Iraqi philologist and poet Ibn Duraid (d. 321/933). Margoliouth’s theory was based on a statement in an anthology, the *Zahr al-ādāb* of the Tunisian author Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm al-Ḥuṣrī (d. 413/1022), that Ibn Duraid’s *Arba‘ūn* were the stimulus to Badi’ az-Zamān’s production of his *maqāmāt*.⁶ But since no biographer of Ibn Duraid mentions these tales, and since we know nothing to connect Ibn Duraid with the themes of *mujūn* and *kudya*, it seems best to regard Ḥuṣrī’s information as suspect.⁷

Recently, A.F.L. Beeston has poured cold water on the oft-repeated statement attributed to Badi’ az-Zamān al-Hamadhānī, famed as the originator for the *maqāma* as we know it, that he had written over 400 *maqāmāt al-kudya* “*maqāmas* on the theme of begging”, i.e. that the 52 extant *maqāmāt* represent a small part only of his output.⁸ As Beeston rightly notes, 40 and 400 are favourite round numbers or vague expressions of large quantity all over the Middle East. More important than this small point, Beeston has also challenged several

⁴ “The spirit of Islam as shown in its literature”, *SI*, I (1953), 114-19, cf. *idem*, *Mediaeval Islam, a study in cultural orientation* (Chicago 1946), 288-9.

⁵ In his *EI*¹ art. “al-Hamadhānī” (written ca. 1923).

⁶ *Zahr al-ādāb wa-thamar al-albāb*, cited in Margoliouth, *op. cit.*

⁷ Blachère and Masnou, *Al-Hamadhānī, Maqāmāt (séances) choisies et traduites de l’arabe, avec une étude sur le genre* (Paris 1957), *Intro.*, 13-15.

⁸ The statement actually appears in the collection of Badi’ az-Zamān’s *Rasā’il* or letters, the *Kaṣf al-ma’ānī wa-l-bayān*, 390, 516. In numbering the extant *maqāmāt* at fifty-one — the number which appears in standard editions like that of Muḥammad ‘Abduh — Beeston forgets (in his article, cited below) the existence of the twenty-sixth one, the *Maqāma Shāmiyya*, omitted from all but the Indian and the Jawā’ib Press editions (Lucknow 1293/1876 and Istanbul 1298/1881) because of its mildly obscene nature, cf. *GAL*, Suppl. I, 151.

long-held assumptions about Badī' az-Zamān's role as originator of the genre. He points out that contemporaries like Abū 'Alī al-Muḥassin b. 'Alī at-Tanūkhī in his *al-Faraj ba'd ash-shidda* made similar use of anecdotal material. Tanūkhī wrote about characters who were outwardly unprepossessing, but who in the course of the story, revealed a prodigious store of eloquence and ingenuity, and in the dénouement of the tale, were shown as persons other than appeared at first sight; the use of anecdotes of this pattern has, indeed, clear roots in the old-established genre of *adab* literature.⁹

Yet it is reasonable to assume a possible influence from (or interaction with, since the relative chronology is uncertain here) the *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya* of Abū Dulaf. As we have seen above, p. 77, Badī' az-Zamān knew Abū Dulaf personally from contacts in the Ṣāḥib b. 'Abbād's circle at Ray, and was the authority for Tha'ālibī's inclusion in the *Yatīmat ad-dahr* of some of Abū Dulaf's verses.¹⁰ We have the express statement of Tha'ālibī that Badī' az-Zamān put some of Abū Dulaf's verses into the mouth of Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Iskandarī in one of his *maqāmāt* (see above, p. 79).

A frequent character in Badī' az-Zamān's *maqāmāt* (although Beeston has pointed out that he appears in by no means all of them) is Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Iskandarī, who poses in various guises in order to get money: as a preacher (*wā'iz*) in the mosques, as a blind man, as a refugee from lands occupied by the advancing Byzantines, as a lunatic, as an aged and decrepit man, as the shaikh of the Banū Sāsān in Damascus, etc. Indeed, he boasts openly at the end of the *maqāma* of Qazwīn of his ability to assume any guise (just like the *ḥākīya*):

As is my state in regard to Fortune (i.e. it is ever-changing), so is my state in regard to my nationality (literally, "lineage", *nasab*),

My nationality is in the hands of Fortune; if Fortune presses it hard, it will change.

[Hence] in the evening I am a Nabaṭī, in the forenoon an Arab.¹¹

⁹ "The genesis of the *maqāmāt* genre", *JAL*, II (1971), 1-12. It should, however, be noted that Blachère and Masnou (*op. cit.*, 31) had already suggested a link between a *maqāma* like that of Ṣaimara (No. 42) and the *adab* collections of Tanūkhī.

¹⁰ Since Badī' az-Zamān was not born till 358/968, and only went to the Ṣāḥib's circle in 380/990, he must have been young when he met the aged Abū Dulaf; but Blachère, *ET*² art. "al-Hamadḥānī" accepts as a reasonable supposition that Badī' az-Zamān's stay in Ray gave him the idea of composing the first *maqāmāt*.

¹¹ Ed. 'Abduh, 96, tr. Prendergast, 81. The lines occur elsewhere, in slightly varying form, as a kind of *leitmotif* of the whole collection of *maqāmāt*.

The hero of Ḥariri's *maqāmāt*, written a century or so after those of Badi' az-Zamān, is Abū Zaid as-Sarūjī,¹² and Abū Zaid is likewise a man of many rôles : a limping cripple, a descendant of the princely house of the Ghassānids fallen on hard times, an old woman with a horde of miserable-looking children, a blind man, a refugee from the Frankish Crusaders who had captured his home town of Sarūj, etc.

Both Abū l-Faṭḥ and Abū Zaid live off their wits, exploiting the gullibility of the masses ; often they pose as travelling Ṣūfīs or ascetics, preaching hell-fire sermons and declaiming poetry on the virtues of withdrawal from the meretricious gauds of this present life. Both Badi' az-Zamān and Ḥariri wrote *maqāmāt* with the explicit title of the *Sāsāniyya* ones. In Badi' az-Zamān's *maqāma* with this title, the narrator 'Isā b. Hishām is in Damascus when he encounters a cohort of beggars, the Banū Sāsān, with their faces muffled up and their clothing smeared with red ochre (*maghra*, cf. Baihaqī's *muṭayyīn*, who smears himself with this to give an appearance of madness, and the *muṭayyīn* of Abū Dulaf, v. 59, see above, pp. 46-7), each one of them bearing a stone under his arm, used for beating his breast to convey an impression of self-mortification. The beggars' leader and spokesman, who inevitably turns out to be Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Iskandarī, reels off a request for a long string of items of food and clothing, and ends up with this *pièce justificative* :

This age is ill-starred, and as you see, oppressive ;
Stupidity is esteemed in it, and intelligence is a fault and cause for blame ;
Wealth is only a fleeting illusion, but it hovers round the ignoble.¹³

In Ḥariri's *maqāma sāsāniyya*, Abū Zaid as-Sarūjī is portrayed as being now ninety-three years of age and approaching death, and is in the conventional situation of giving a *waṣiyya* or testament to his son (cf. the identical situation for the Story of Khālīd b. Yazīd in Jāḥiẓ's *Kitāb al-Bukhalā'*), appointing him leader of the Banū Sāsān in his stead. In this testament, Abū Zaid says that he himself had finally

¹² Who may have been modelled on an actual person ; Ḥariri's son relates in Ibn Khallikān's article on his father that Ḥariri met the real Abū Zaid as-Sarūjī in the mosque of the B. Ḥarām in Baṣra, and was thereby stimulated to compose the first of his *maqāmāt*, the *Ḥarāmiyya* one ; other sources make the model for Abū Zaid one Muṭahhar b. Sallār al-Baṣrī, with whom Ḥariri had dealings. See Yāqūt, *Irshād*, VI, 167-8, 173 ; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, IV, 63-4, tr. II, 490-1.

¹³ Ed. 'Abduh, 97-101, tr. Prendergast, 81-3, tr. Blachère and Masnou, 84-6.

chosen the life of a beggar after sampling the callings of statesman, merchant, farmer and artisan, and finding that none of them was worth the trouble and responsibility involved. The life of a beggar is far better: the beggar is not tied down to any one country, but can leave it when he pleases; he obeys no ruler; and he can practice his trade anywhere. Here, Abū Zaid's defence of begging is reminiscent of that by Abū Dulaf in the opening lines of the *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, vv. 11 ff., where Abū Dulaf boasts of the beggars' freedom to range all over the world. All that the skilful mendicant requires by way of qualifications, says Abū Zaid, are zeal and cunning, the avoidance of sloth, and a willingness always to choose the bird in hand rather than the one in the bush.¹⁴

It is, however, in Badī' az-Zamān's *maqāma* of Ruṣāfa that our author gives us detailed information on the tricks of the rogues and beggars, information which is comparable, though without the details and the technical terminology, with that retailed by Abū Dulaf and Ṣafī d-Dīn. The setting is the mosque of Ruṣāfa, the quarter on the eastern side of Baghdad, where the narrator 'Īsā b. Hishām shelters from the heat and listens to a discussion on robbers and cutpurses (*ṭarrārūn*, cf. the boast of al-Aqṭa' al-Kūfī in Ray that he had been a *ṭarrār*, above, p. 74). Amongst a long list of rogues and their activities, we may note some of particular interest. In all cases, Badī' az-Zamān merely gives the name of the trick or the names of its practitioners, and the explanations given here derive from Muḥammad 'Abduh's commentary; how correctly 'Abduh interpreted Badī' az-Zamān's terse phrases is not easy to assess, but he more than once cites parallels from his own experience of Egyptian life, and many of the stratagems involved are of eternal validity. Certainly, the whole catalogue provides a rich panorama of thieves, con-men and swindlers of all possible types.

¹⁴ Ed. Cairo 1326/1908, 569-82, tr. Steingass, in T. Chénery and F. Steingass, *The assemblies of al-Ḥarīrī* (London 1867-98), II, 169-75. An interesting parallel to this encomium of begging is found in Elizabethan English literature, in the shape of the mock sermon of one Parson Hyberdyne. This last was set upon by robbers, who then compelled him to preach for them a sermon in praise of their nefarious trade; this he did with such eloquence that the robbers returned to him his money plus two extra shillings for his trouble. In the course of the sermon, the preacher praises thieving because it demands high qualities of boldness and perseverance, and cites numerous biblical justifications for the practice; and in his peroration, he compares the wandering robber, shunned by all men, with no place to lay his head, arraigned and then condemned, with Christ himself. See Viles and Furnivall, *The rogues and vagabonds of Shakespeare's youth*, 95.

Amongst Badi' az-Zamān's characters are, for instance, the *aṣḥāb al-fuṣūṣ*, who forge the seals of men known to be wealthy and then, in the rich man's peronal absence, gain access to his treasury by means of the forged ring. Another type of rogue takes his place in the ranks of worshippers during the *ṣalāt*, and then when they are occupied with the bowings and prostrations, makes off with any article of clothing or suchlike on which he can lay his hands. Another rogue sells a merchant a lock which is defective or which is easily opened without a key; he then comes back later, gains access to the premises, and steals goods. The use of narcotics by beggars, in order to commit homosexual assaults on the youths in their bands, is mentioned by Abū Dulaf, vv. 115-20; Badi' az-Zamān cites here the rogue who drugs his victim with cannabis indica (*banj*) and makes off with his money, a device utilised by Ḥarirī in his *maqāma* of Wāsiṭ, in which Abū Zaid drugs the company at a wedding feast and ransacks the caravanserai.¹⁵ The sham ascetics and Ṣūfīs are called the *aṣḥāb al-'alāmāt*, i.e. they have distinctive items of dress for each particular group, foreshadowing the distinguishing features adopted by many of the dervish orders, e.g. the frequently-worn patched cloak (*khirqā* or *muraqqa'*), and the special varieties of turbans and felt caps (*tāj*, *kulāh*) of certain orders.¹⁶ Other classes of rogue steal by squatting down to urinate by someone's pile of goods, and then when the owner looks away out of modesty, they decamp with the goods. Several groups of thieves use ropes to ascend house walls, a technique necessary in oriental towns where houses tend to show smooth, windowless façades to the street outside; these are "the men with grapnels on the end of palm-fibre ropes", *aṣḥāb al-khaṭāṭīf 'alā l-ḥabl min al-līf*, who may also use their ropes to tie purloined goods on the end and then lower them to an accomplice in the street below.¹⁷ Closely connected with these last is "the trick with the two sticks", in which the thief climbs on to a house roof and then drops a long pole with a hook on the end down to a caravan passing in the street below, and fishes up any item which he can get.¹⁸ Criminals

¹⁵ Ed. Cairo, 295-311, tr. Steingass, II, 14-24. On the sinister figure of the *mubanniḥ*, see F. Rosenthal, *The herb, hashish versus medieval Muslim society* (Leiden 1971), 19-20.

¹⁶ See J.S. Trimingham, *The Sufi orders in Islam* (Oxford 1971), 181-5.

¹⁷ Ar-Rāghib al-Isfahānī's informant 'Uthmān al-Khayyāt calls these scalers of walls *mutasalliqūn*, see below p. 104.

¹⁸ In Elizabethan England, the "Hooker" or "Angler", as Thomas Harman calls him in his *Caveat for common Cursetors*, was a well-known rogue, whose skill might be such, so Harman asserts, that he could pull the sheets and coverlet off a bed in which

masquerading as policemen have become commonplaces in the annals of crime in our own time; in Badi' az-Zamān's age, clever thieves pretended to be men of the *Shurṭa* or police guard, assuming the latter's characteristic weapon of the *ṭabarzīn* or battleaxe, and then lured away the owner of the house on alleged official business. Instead of the modern passer of dud cheques, there was the man who gave a fraudulent financial draft (*suftaja*) on the pretext of relieving his victim of the burden of carrying round heavy coinage; and the fraudulent bankrupt, whom Badi' az-Zamān mentions, is a perennial type. The robbers who burrow and blast their way into bank vaults today had their counterparts in the thieves who bored into the cellars and *sardābs*, underground rooms in which refuge was sought from the summer heat in provinces like Iraq, the *naqqābūn* of Khālid b. Yazīd and the *aṣḥāb an-naqb* of Jaubārī. And so Badi' az-Zamān's catalogue of rogues continues, the ones mentioned above being only a small proportion of the complete list.¹⁹

II

The figure of 'Uthmān al-Khayyāt merits mention as a pendant to the panorama of ingenious criminals set forth in the *maqāma* of Ruṣāfa. We know of 'Uthmān only from the pages of ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, who speaks of him at length, in his chapter on boldness and suchlike qualities, as an authority on thieving and brigandage, *talaṣṣuṣ*; he must therefore have flourished in the 5th/11th century or in the period preceeding it. Of biographical information, ar-Rāghib notes only that 'Uthmān was well known as a skilful thief both along the roads and in the settled communities, and that he derived his nickname of "al-Khayyāt" not from any connection with the craft of tailoring, but because he was an adroit borer into people's houses, *naqqāb*,

someone was sleeping without waking that person up. Robert Greene calls the practice of angling for plunder "Courbing law" in his *The Black Bookes Messenger. Laying open the Life and Death of Ned Browne, one of the most notable Culpurses, Cross biters and Conny-catchers that ever lived in England*, and relates in this an amusing anecdote of how an Angler or Curber was hoist with his own petard, by mistakenly angling from below a full chamber pot, whose contents came down on him, leaving him "almost brained, almost drowned and well near poisoned therewith!" See Harman, in Viles and Furnivall, *op. cit.*, 36, and Greene in *The Life and complete works in prose and verse ... collected and edited by A.B. Grosart* (London 1881-6), XI, 32-3.

¹⁹ Ed. 'Abduh, 165-73, tr. Prendergast, 122-8.

closing up the hole so skilfully and unobtrusively behind him that it was as if he had sewn it up (*khāṭahu*).²⁰

Ar-Rāghib quotes 'Uthmān al-Khayyāt that there are five main classes of thieves and brigands (*luṣūṣ*). The first is "the one who works by stratagems" (*al-muhtāl*), who does not kill in the course of his activities and who does not possess the qualities of fortitude and endurance which the true brigand has — hence the *luṣūṣ* proper, the real desperadoes, look down on him and do not associate with him, "The man who works by night" (*ṣāhib al-lail*) is the nocturnal house-breaker, who works either by boring into house walls (*naqb*) or by scaling the walls (*tasalluq*), and also the nocturnal practitioner of robbery with violence, the *mukābir*.²¹ The "gentleman of the road" (*ṣāhib at-ṭarīq*) is simply a highwayman. The *nabbāsh* (literally, "grave-despoiler, tomb robber, burrower, digger for treasure, etc.") is said to be well-known; presumably he burrowed into people's treasure vaults or exhumed their buried hoards. The *khannāq* (literally "strangler, assassin") may be one of several sub-types. One of them in the *ṣāhib ba'j*, the disemboweller and ripper-open of bellies. Another is the *ṣāhib raḍkh*, "the crusher or pounder",²² who befriends and then accompanies a solitary traveller, and when the unsuspecting victim is prostrating himself in prayer, or is sleeping, or is even standing up, the *rāḍikh* creeps up and hits him over both ears simultaneously with two smooth stones. Most *ruḍḍākh* are not content with stunning their victim in this manner, but go on to kill him, in order to escape subsequent identification and detection. Other subdivisions of the *khannāqūn* work by strangling their victim, at the same time throwing his robe over his head, or by luring the victim into a house, where he is then strangled, there being a group of musicians ready with drums and cymbals, and men shouting together like lamenting women, in order to drown the victims' cries.

Then follows some account of the confederates or accomplices (*auna*) of the thieves and brigands. The *ain* is, as his name implies, a "spy" who "cases" the premises of potential victims. Thus he watches the arrival of consignments of precious metals at the money-changers

²⁰ *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*, II, 108, 110.

²¹ For *kābara* "he used violence", see Fagnan, *Additions aux dictionnaires arabes*, 149, citing the phrase *al-mukābara bi-l-luṣūṣiyya*.

²² *Raḍakha* or *raḍaḥa* is originally used of crushing up something with a stone, e.g. the head of a dangerous snake, cf. *LA*, III, 267, 495-6, and *TA*, II, 144, 258.

and bankers, or the arrival of boatloads of goods;²³ he familiarises himself with the warehouses, and secures entry to the houses of merchants and others by asking to wash there, so that he can get a look round the premises. The *mu'tī* or "carrier" acts as a banker or agent for people, buying and selling on their behalf, and making out that he is a person of consequence, such as the proprietor of a village or headman of a town quarter, presumably in order to establish a bond of confidence. The *shāghīl* or "distracter" diverts people's attention from the activities of the thief proper. The *ṭarrār*, whom we have already met in Abū Ḥayyān at-Tauḥīdī and in Badī' az-Zamān's *maqāmāt* in the sense of "cutpurse", see above, pp. 74, 101, is mentioned at this point, but his activities are not described. It is merely stated that he usually operates with a confederate, so that if the *ṭarrār* is apprehended, the confederate complains volubly that he himself has been robbed, beats the *ṭarrār* violently and creates a great hullabaloo, in the middle of which he secretly helps the *ṭarrār* to flee.

At this point, 'Uthmān al-Khayyāt indulges in some philosophising about his profession, with a eulogy of the trade of thieving. People, he avers, have always stolen from each other, but have in the past termed it *ghazw* "raiding" and the proceeds *ghanīma* "plunder"; and what the thieves take has usually been seized by force and trickery in the first place anyway. Hence thieves should call themselves *ghuzāt* "raiders, fighter for the faith", just as the Khawārij euphemistically called themselves *shurāt* "those who are prepared to sell (*sharā*) their stake in the present life in return for a share in the after life".²⁴ On this basis, it can legitimately be argued that the thief is less reprehensible than the governor who takes bribes or the *qāḍī* who devours the property of orphans.

To conclude, 'Uthmān al-Khayyāt has some good advice on bringing up children to be skilful thieves. One should embolden them to make forays (*mukhārajāt*),²⁵ teach them adroitness, and instruct them how

²³ This mention of river transportation may mean that 'Uthmān al-Khayyāt's activities and knowledge of criminals relate primarily to Iraq.

²⁴ This term denoting the Khawārij echoes Qur'anic phraseology, where the Muslim believers sell or barter (*sharā*) their share of the present life for the hereafter, and God purchases (*ishtarā*) their souls, cf. Qur'an, ii, 203/206, iv, 76-73, and ix, 112.

²⁵ This seems to be the meaning here, though the expected word for "foray" would be *kharja*, pl. *kharajāt*. The third verbal form *khāraja*, with a basic conative meaning like "he tried to pull out", can denote the playing by two children of a game with their fingers, see *LA*, III, 78, *TA*, II, 30. Hence there is a possibility here that 'Uthmān is

to endure blows from the authorities and police, so that they become hardened and will not soften up when captured and maltreated. On the theoretical side, children should be taught poetry and stories about the heroes of the early Arabs, about the virtues of the *fityān*,²⁶ and about the endurance qualities of those languishing in jail. ‘Uthmān warns the would-be thief against indulgence in intoxicants, because they make the body feel heavy and uncomfortable, and cause excessive urination and sleepiness at night, the time when the thief should be at work and should be especially alert and able to concentrate on the task in hand. It is obvious that the thief should possess the characteristics of boldness, agility, sharpwittedness and lust for riches, but he should also build up a favourable image amongst the community at large by frequenting the company of honest citizens and dressing like them. Ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī brings his chapter on the activities of thieves to a close with various illustrative anecdotes on the ability of captured criminals to endure beatings and torture, on the activities of the *tarrārūn*, on the imprisonment and crucifixion of malefactors, etc.²⁷

III

The chronological gap from the later years of the 5th/11th century, when ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī wrote his *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā’*, and the opening years of the 6th/12th century, when Ḥarīrī wrote his *maqāmāt*, to be followed by a host of imitators, to the 8th/14th century, when Ṣafī d-Dīn al-Ḥillī wrote his *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, is bridged by two important works for the student of the literature on the Banū Sāsān. The first one is a work of outstanding importance, a complete book devoted to the Banū Sāsān and their associates and to their shady activities. This is the *Kitāb al-Mukhtār fī kashf al-asrār wa-hatk al-astār* of the Arabic author Zain ad-Dīn ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm b. ‘Umar ad-Dimashqī al-Jaubarī (*floruit* during the first half of the 7th/13th

urging, in a Fagin-like way, that children should be taught to be light-fingered in picking purses; but the sense of “forays” seems more likely.

²⁶ It is quite uncertain about which groups the writer is thinking here. One possibility is the urban groups of vigilantes and young men frequently found in the eastern and central lands of the Islamic Near East, see above, p. 37 n. 99. But Abū Dulaf in his *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya* speaks of the beggar youths as *fityān*, and apparently refers to the beggars’ code of behaviour as *futuwwa*, see v. 115, commentary.

²⁷ *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā’*, II, 108-15.

century).²⁸ As the book's name implies, Jaubarī aimed at "unveiling", "taking away the coverings", from the swindles and tricks perpetrated by the Sāsānis on the gullible populace of his age.

Jaubarī wrote his book at the request of his patron, the Turkmen Amīr of Ḥiṣn Kaifā and Āmid in Diyārbakr of the Artuqid dynasty, al-Malik al-Mas'ūd Rukn ad-Dīn Maudūd (619-29/1222-32).²⁹ Jaubarī says in the Introduction to the *Kashf al-asrār* that he had previously studied the existing literature on philosophy and the sciences — comprising 300 odd or 1300 odd books on these topics alone — and had then gone on to peruse the works on the various types of trickery, *funūn an-nawāmīs*.³⁰ It was a work exposing the tricks of various classes of rogues by the Andalusian poet and writer Ibn Shuhaid (d. 426/1035), the *Kitāb fī Kashf ad-dakk wa-īdāh ash-shakk*, which had been brought to the Artuqid Amīr's notice, which now caused him to ask Jaubarī to follow in Ibn Shuhaid's path, but in a more detailed fashion;³¹ it is recorded that this Amīr, like his father al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ Nāṣir ad-Dīn Maḥmūd, was well-known for his love of philosophy and the more recherché branches of learning.³²

Jaubarī himself was an indefatigable traveller, and in the course of the *Kashf al-asrār* mentions that he had been in Konya and Malatya in Rūm, in Damascus and Ḥarrān in his native Syria, in Cyprus, in Egypt and the Red Sea port of 'Aidhāb, in the Ḥijāz and Yemen, and even in India. In the extent of his peregrinations, he inevitably re-

²⁸ From Jaubar, "a village in the Ghūṭa of Damascus", according to Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, ed. Beirut, II, 176-7; it lies in fact a short distance to the east of the modern city, and is now virtually a suburb of Damascus.

²⁹ Who was actually the last independent ruler of this branch of the Artuqids, his principality being taken over in 629/1232 by the Ayyūbid al-Malik al-Kāmil; see *EI*² art. "Artuqids" (Cl. Cahen), and H.L. Gottschalk, *Al-Malik al-Kāmil und seine Zeit* (Wiesbaden 1958), 39-40, 124-5, 133-5, 205-8.

³⁰ Ed. Damascus, 2-5, ed. Cairo, 2-3; the text is also given in de Goeje's article on Jaubarī's work (see below, n. 38), 486-8, but the Kara Çelebizade 253 manuscript is damaged and defective at the beginning. A large proportion of the books by earlier authorities, many allegedly from classical antiquity, which are mentioned here by Jaubarī are, in reality, apocryphal.

³¹ The title of Ibn Shuhaid's book (if this is the exact title and not merely Jaubarī's description of its contents) is given only in the Leiden manuscript used by de Goeje, and this title does not appear at all in the printed texts of the *Kashf al-asrār*. Ibn Shuhaid's book has not survived and nothing is otherwise known of it; James Dickie does not mention it in his exhaustive article "Ibn Šuhayd, a biographical and critical study", *Al-Andalus*, XXIX (1964), 243-310.

³² Gottschalk, *op. cit.*, 205.

minds one of Abū Dulaf, and like Abū Dulaf, must have had in his own character and make-up something of the Sāsānī and bohemian. But apart from all these travels, Jaubari would have had ample opportunity to observe the activities of the Banū Sāsān and their confrères in his native Ghūṭa of Damascus, for the local historian of Damascus Abū l-Baqā' 'Abdallāh b. Muḥammad al-Badrī (d. 909/1503-4) speaks graphically of the teeming life in the old city of Damascus, and the charlatans and tricksters who thronged it:

As for the open space called "Beneath the Citadel", one can hardly see the actual ground there because of the tremendous number of people, both the food peddlars and petty traders (*muta'ayyishīn* ³³) and those receiving charitable allowances. Interspersed amongst them, one finds those who make up the circles of Ṣūfī devotees (or perhaps, "the circles of swindlers", *aṣḥāb al-ḥalaq*, following Abū Dulaf's usage of the term *ḥalqa*, *Qaṣida sāsāniyya*, v. 57, commentary), horoscope casters (*fa'lāṭiyya*), jesters, those who do amusing tricks, reciters of stories and tales, and indeed, everything in which the ear can delight and the eye rejoice, and which the soul can desire — all these folk continuing their activities morning and evening, without cease, but above all, in the evenings ... ³⁴

Jaubari's book is a mine of recondite information on the numerous classes of beggars, swindlers, prestidigitateurs, quacks, alchemists, astrologers, etc. Often he gives technical details of the working of elaborate tricks and devices, the mechanics of which are not always apparent to us today from his descriptions (see below).³⁵ Thus as well as having a didactic value — the deterring of the gullible from being taken in by swindlers — the book has an importance for the historian of Islamic science and technology. It was this latter aspect which attracted the attention of the great historian of Islamic science Eilhard Wiedemann (1852-1928), who used two early printed texts of the *Kashf al-asrār* (Damascus 1302/1885 and Cairo 1316/1898-9), together with manuscripts from European libraries which included sections not given in the two prints, to describe and comment upon such things as fraudulent balances, weapons and machines of war, tricks involving

³³ For this sense of *muta'ayyish* in Mamlūk usage, see Lapidus, *Muslim cities in the later Middle Ages*, 82, 267-8.

³⁴ *Nuzhat al-anām fī maḥāsin ash-Shām* (Cairo 1341/1922-3), 63; on the author and his work, see *GAL*², II, 164, Suppl. II, 163.

³⁵ Certain manuscripts apparently contain diagrams of these contrivances, but these again are not always very explicit.

chemicals, the secrets of druggists and perfumers, the instruments used by quack doctors, oculists, etc., and so forth.³⁶

The *Kashf al-asrār* should accordingly be a basic text for the social historian of Islam, but up till now it has never been properly exploited. This is largely due to the extremely unsatisfactory state of the text as we have it. The work itself has been a popular one in the Islamic world, testifying to the continuing fascination for the Muslim mind of tricksters and their practices down to the present day. A considerable number of manuscripts exist (one of which is a Karshuni one, i.e. Arabic language in Syriac script), and there are at least four oriental prints from places like Damascus, Cairo (two) and Istanbul.³⁷ But the manuscripts differ amongst themselves in contents and arrangement, and the subject matter is in places difficult to grasp where descriptions of complicated devices or curious drugs and products are being given. M. Steinschneider first described some of the manuscripts in European libraries, but it was M.J. de Goeje who gave a detailed analysis of the *Kashf al-asrār*'s contents from a good Leiden manuscript (Leiden 1233 = Warner 191).³⁸ Virtually nothing has been done on the text since then, and a critical text, based on a wide examination of manuscripts, is a pressing desideratum.³⁹ Until now, European orientalists (with the exceptions of Wiedemann and Horovitz) have tended to cite de Goeje's article rather than go to the unsatisfactory printed texts. For the present purposes, there has been consulted in the first place an Istanbul manuscript, Kara Çelebizade 253 (Mikrofilm arşivi No. 71), which dates from 717/1317-18 and must be one of the oldest ones in existence. This has been supplemented by reference to the printed texts of Damascus 1302/1885 (press unmentioned) and of Cairo, Maṭba'at al-Jamal al-Miṣriyya, ca. 1336/1918.

³⁶ See his "Beiträge zur Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften", Nos. IV, VI, XII, XXIII, XXVI, originally in *SBPMSE* (1905-11), reprinted in *Aufsätze zur arabischen Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Hildesheim 1970); for a general discussion of the *Kashf al-asrār*, see especially Beitrag IV in *Aufsätze*, I, 105-7 n.

³⁷ See *GAL*², I, 565, Suppl. I, 910.

³⁸ Steinschneider, "Gaubari's "entdeckte Geheimnisse", eine Quelle für orientalische Sittenschilderung", *ZDMG*, XIX (1865), 562-77; de Goeje, "Gaubari's "entdeckte Geheimnisse" ", *ZDMG*, XX (1866), 485-510; see also H.L. Fleischer, "Bemerkungen zu Gaubari's "entdeckte Geheimnissen" u.a.", *ZDMG*, XXI (1867), 274-6.

³⁹ Such a text is now being prepared by Dr Stefan Wild, formerly Director of the Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenlandischen Gesellschaft in Beirut and now of the University of Amsterdam.

However, from reference to the studies of de Goeje and Wiedemann, it is clear that even the good Kara Çelebizade manuscript lacks part of the introduction and certain other sections.

Jaubarī devotes the sixth chapter of his book specifically to the Banū Sāsān. He attributes to them a thousand types of trickery, which he lacks space to describe at length, but he enumerates amongst the Banū Sāsān the practitioners of secret tricks (*aṣḥāb an-nawāmīs*); the fakirs and dervishes (*mudarwizūn*; cf. Abū Dulaf, *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, v. 32, who uses the verb *darwaza* in referring to the beggars who swagger through the streets and alleys of a town mocking and insulting women); the gypsies or Zutt with feigned disabilities; those who go round with animals which they have tamed, such as bears, monkeys, goats and donkeys, and who have taught creatures like cats and rats to live on peaceable terms with each other; those who make up beards for the beardless (?);⁴⁰ and those who show off various physical disabilities such as lameness, blindness, ulcers and sores, and dropsical conditions. The recipes used for inducing or simulating these afflictions are detailed. Thus for feigning blindness one smears a mixture of monkey's blood and gum arabic on the corners of the eyelids, so that they become puffy and closed up, and stick together. This effect can easily be rectified by applying a soapy solution. Vitiligo (*baraṣ*) or leprosy (*judhām*) can be simulated by boiling up and then applying to the body a compound of indigo-leaf, basil, cubeb and green vitriol or copperas; and so forth.⁴¹ Concerning the animal trainers, Jaubarī tells the amusing story of how he saw in Ḥarrān in 613/1216-17 a man who had trained an ape to perform all the outward acts of Muslim piety, such as the *tastīm*, praying and weeping. He then took the ape along to the mosque on Friday, richly dressed as an Indian prince and with three Indian attendants. To the assembled people, the ape's owner explained that the pious Indian prince had been turned into an ape by the magic of his wife, who had unjustly suspected him of being impassioned of a slaveboy; he was now collecting money to repay an alleged sum owed to the wife, before she would turn him back into a human being! Naturally, contributions came rolling in from the worshippers in the mosque.⁴²

⁴⁰ Tentatively following here de Goeje's emendation of *sunuṭ*; the Kara Çelebizade MS. has "for women", whilst the printed texts omit the phrase altogether.

⁴¹ MS. ff. 29a-30a, ed. Damascus, 44-5, ed. Cairo, 24-5.

⁴² MS. ff. 30a-31a, ed. Damascus, 45-8, ed. Cairo, 25-6.

In a chapter towards the end of the *Kashf al-asrār* which deals primarily with the swindles of the alchemists and other exponents of mechanical and scientific devices (*aṣḥāb aṣ-ṣanāʿi*), we find mentioned three tricks which are said to be specialities of the Banū Sāsān. The first is a version of the classic goldbrick confidence trick. The Sāsāni takes a brass ornament or jewelry trinket and gilds or silvers it to look like a solid metal object worth several hundred dinārs or dirhams. He then leaves it on a quiet country road and conceals himself. An innocent passer-by lights on it, but at the same time the Sāsāni springs out, claiming to have seen it at the same time and to be thus entitled to a half share in it.⁴³ However, he is prepared to sell his share to the dupe (here called the *khushnī*, a term familiar in the *Qaṣīda sāsāniyyas* of Abū Dulaf and Ṣafī d-Dīn for the victims of the beggars' tricks, see below, pp. 159, 178) for an apparently modest sum; he then disappears before the spurious precious object can be properly assayed and valued. In the second trick, the Sāsāni pretends to have involuntarily let fall from his head a vessel or container⁴⁴ full of grain, which is really full of earthenware crocks with a thin covering of grain on top; he then appeals to the compassion of passers-by to make good his loss of food for his family. In the third trick, the trickster employs a small girl, who takes up her position on a busy road, combing the ground as if for something lost, and holding the neck only of a broken glass vessel; she weeps copiously and appeals to passers-by for money, saying that her flask has been broken and she has lost the money with which she was sent to buy olive oil.⁴⁵

Jaubari is especially detailed on the activities of those who use religion and asceticism as cloaks for their trickery, and the third chapter of the *Kashf al-asrār* is devoted to popular preachers (*wuʿāẓ*), whom he describes as the highest class of the Banū Sāsān and the most adept

⁴³ A not dissimilar practice of rogues in Elizabethan England is described by Robert Greene. A shilling was dropped in front of the intended victim. When he picked it up, the cozeners sprang forward and cried "Half-part!". Quoting the adage "Tis ill luck to keep found money", the victim was lured to a nearby tavern to spend the money; the cozeners having caught their conny, speedily fleeced him of all his money at gambling (*A notable discovery of Coosnage* [1591], quoted in Aydelotte, *Elizabethan rogues and vagabonds*, 87-8).

⁴⁴ *D.r.mūn*, a word which is clearly written in the manuscript but which I have been unable to find in the lexica or dialect dictionaries; the meaning, however, seems clear from the context (this second trick is omitted from the two printed editions of the *Kashf al-asrār* consulted).

⁴⁵ MS. ff. 106a-107b, ed. Damascus, 140-1, ed. Cairo, 77-8.

at wheedling out money (*akdā*), having been founded by Shaikh Sāsān himself. Amongst these is the one who mounts the pulpit and harangues his audience about the terrors of the Day of Judgement, "whilst weeping copiously with tears hotter than a burning coal". These tears are in fact induced by wiping the eyes surreptitiously with a towel which has been dipped in a mixture of pounded-up mustard seeds and vinegar, steeped together for a day and two nights. When this decoction is applied to the eyes, it make the tears flow like rain. A confidence trick worked by one of these preachers and his confederate involves the latter preceding the preacher to the place where he is to speak, and pretending to be a Jew or Christian. Once the preacher is himself established in the town, the confederate comes to his pulpit, clinging to its side, opening the door, ascending to the preacher, and telling him that he had had the previous day a vision of the Prophet Muḥammad and the Prophet 'Īsā b. Maryam together, and Muḥammad had adjured him to abandon his error and testify to the true faith of Islam. When the confederate had in this vision expressed his fear of punishment from Yasū' al-Masiḥ if he abandoned his ancestral faith of Christianity, Muḥammad had called upon Jesus to proclaim that he, Jesus, was not divine but merely mortal, and that the man should embrace the faith of Islam. Finally, Muḥammad had commanded him to seek the presence of such-and-such a preacher, who would instruct him in the fundamentals of Islam. In this way, the preacher's spiritual power and prestige is firmly established in the eyes of the populace, and their alms and gifts come rolling in.⁴⁶ This trick is, in fact, very reminiscent of the one described by Abū Dulaf three centuries before, in which the *muḡanwin*, son of a Christian father and a Jewish mother, establishes a claim on people's sympathy and generosity by claiming that the Prophet Muḥammad had appeared to him in a dream and had persuaded him to abandon the faith of his parents for that of Islam (*Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, v. 59).

Jaubārī further gives interesting information on various false prophets who arose in his time. One of them was called *al-Mafqūd* ("the witless, deranged one") or "the prophet of aṣ-Ṣafṣāf".⁴⁷ During the reign of the Ayyūbid Sultan al-Malik al-'Ādil Saif ad-Dīn Abū

⁴⁶ MS. ff. 20b-21b, ed. Damascus, 33-5, ed. Cairo, 18-19.

⁴⁷ Apparently a village in the Ghūṭa of Damascus ("the Willows") rather than the Ṣafṣāf in the frontier region of al-Maṣṣīṣa mentioned by Yāqūt, see Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems* (London 1890), 526.

Bakr b. Ayyūb (635-7/1238-40), he proclaimed that he was Jesus Christ, after having collected a large following in the villages of the Ghūṭa of Damascus by miraculously producing fruits which were completely out of season.⁴⁸ Amongst other religious figures of his time who claimed charismatic and miraculous powers (*mashyakha*), Jaubārī mentions that he witnessed the episode of an Alid claimant, one Shaikh Ḥasan at Qalhāt in Yemen ⁴⁹ in 621/1224. This man raised a rebellion, and claimed sainthood on the basis of a staff which miraculously sprouted twigs and leaves — the leaves being in fact made of paper dyed green and the sprouting twigs being concealed in slits in the side of the staff. Also, he witnessed at 'Aidhāb a Nubian shaikh who was much venerated by the Takrūrīs or blacks from the western Sudan. He had a *zāwīya* or retreat on the shores of the Red Sea, and in the course of his *samā'* or ecstatic liturgical sessions, he used to throw his prayer mat out to sea, and then sit and dance on it; the prayer mat was actually kept afloat by means of three inflated goatskins, and there was a secret rudder which the shaikh could work surreptitiously with his feet.⁵⁰

The excesses of the various groups of dervishes, which by Jaubārī's time were being organised into definite orders or *ṭuruq*, attracted his attention. Thus he noted that the Rifā'iyya specialised in biting off the heads of snakes and eating fire; they cut their beards off and loaded themselves with irons, some of them even piercing their penises for the insertion of an iron ring.⁵¹ They were also notorious hashish eaters, a narcotic denounced by Jaubārī as one of the strongest of drugs, producing effects like intoxication and therefore illicit for Muslims.⁵²

⁴⁸ MS. ff. 14b-15a, ed. Damascus, 24-5, ed. Cairo, 13-14.

⁴⁹ According to Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, ed. Beirut, IV, 393, Qalhāt was actually in Oman and a centre of the Ibādiyya.

⁵⁰ MS. ff. 114b-116a, ed. Damascus, 148 (the story of the Qalhāt impostor lacking here, and the story of the 'Aidhāb shaikh much curtailed; the whole chapter lacking in the Cairo edition).

⁵¹ Practices such as these (the piercing of the penis, *tathqīb al-ihlāl*, being a sign of continence) were common amongst all the Qalandarī or antinomian groups of dervishes. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa saw in Khurasan adherents of the Ḥaidariyya order who loaded themselves with iron rings, and he mentions fire-walking and serpent-eating Rifā'is in Lower Iraq (*Rihla*, ed. and tr. C. Defrémery and B.R. Sanguinetti [Paris 1853-9], II, 4-5, III, 79-80, tr. H.A.R. Gibb, *The travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa A.D. 1325-1354* [Cambridge 1958-71], II, 273-4, III, 583; see also Trimingham, *The Sufi orders in Islam*, 28-9, 267-8).

⁵² MS. ff. 17b-18a, ed. Damascus, 29, ed. Cairo, 16. The legal controversies over the use of hashish are discussed by F. Rosenthal in his *The herb, hashish versus medieval*

The Jawāliqiyya went around wearing old sacks (*jawālīq*, sing. *juwālīq* < Persian *guwāl(a)*), and like the Rifā'iyya, they trimmed their beards right off, a practice censured by Jaubarī as a *bid'a*, reprehensible innovation; they were antinomians, and neither fasted nor prayed.⁵³ The Ḥarīriyya were the followers of an antinomian shaikh from the Ḥaurān, Abū Muḥammad 'Alī al-Ḥarīrī (d. 645/1247-8), who played a great rôle in the introduction of the Rifā'i order into the Damascus area, despite strenuous hostility from the Ayyūbid rulers.⁵⁴ Jaubarī states that he started preaching in Damascus the doctrines of antinomianism and libertinism, proclaiming "Don't deny your appetitive faculty (*nafs*) any of its desires or enjoyment, for whatever your *nafs* seeks is what is good for it; so urge it on to that!". It is known from other sources that Shaikh Ḥarīrī could often be found in the *ḥammām* or baths in the company of a group of naked boys, from which habit witnesses drew their own conclusions, for pederasty was another recognised vice of antinomian Ṣūfīs.⁵⁵ Indeed, baths had always been regarded as ideal places for assignations and sexual adventures, continuing the traditions here of the classical Mediterranean world.⁵⁶ Shaikh Ḥarīrī at one point suffered imprisonment at the hands of the Sultan in Damascus, al-Malik al-Ashraf Muẓaffar ad-Dīn Abū l-Faṭḥ Mūsā (626-34/1229-37), but Jaubarī mentions the persistence in his time of no fewer than three sub-sects of the Ḥarīriyya.⁵⁷

Excesses such as these continued during the Mamlūk period to arouse the hostility of the conservative religious leaders, such as

Muslim society, 101 ff.; early jurists (sc. those of the period 8th/14th-10th/16th centuries) almost unanimously condemned its usage, on analogy with the prohibition of wine because of its intoxicating effects.

⁵³ MS. f. 18a, ed. Damascus, 30, ed. Cairo, 16. These Jawāliqiyya, followers of a Persian Qalandarī or antinomian dervish called Ḥasan al-Jawālīqī, were in fact connected with the Rifā'iyya and with the Ḥarīriyya mentioned below, see Trimingham, *op. cit.*, 39 n. 8.

⁵⁴ See *ibid.*, 39-40, 267, 280.

⁵⁵ Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥamid, II, 89, No. 290, ed. 'Abbās, III, 7, No. 335.

⁵⁶ Tha'ālībī cites a certain wit, one Abū 'Abdallāh al-Jammāz, that copulation in the baths is one of the three pleasant things of life (the other two being urinating in a washing-bowl and slapping a bald man on his pate!), but elsewhere quotes the physician Jibril b. Bukhtishū' that sexual excess in the baths is one of the things which undermines a man's constitution (*Bard al-akbād fī l-a'dād*, 121, l. 21, 133, l. 6). See also Munajjid, *al-Ḥayāt al-jinsiyya 'ind al-'Arab*, 87.

⁵⁷ MS. ff. 18a-19b, ed. Damascus, 30-2, ed. Cairo, 16-18.

Ibn Taimiyya, but the strength of the popular followings of certain miracle-mongering Šūfī shaiḫs made it difficult for the authorities to touch them. Hence the Mamlūk poet Abū l-Faṭḥ Ibn Sayyid an-Nās (671-734/1273-1334) could still comment wryly :

The characteristics of a Šūfī in our time comprise six only, no more :

Sc. copulating with pretty boys, drinking wine, eating hashish, dancing, singing and pimping.

And if a Šūfī follows the divine guidance and shows forth a desire for union with God and for a seemly withdrawal from the world, doing all this repeatedly,

And if he commits reprehensible deeds against both the dictates of intellect and against the religious law, then he will be the supreme shaiḫ, that is, the head of his order (lit. possessor of the prayer mat, *dhā sajjāda*).⁵⁸

The priests and monks of the Christians, with whom Jaubarī in his native Ghūṭa of Damascus and in travels through Egypt, Syria, Rum and Diyārbakr would have much contact, fare no better than Muslim religious tricksters in his denunciations. He characterises them as the most mendacious, hypocritical and crafty of men, who play upon the credulity of the Christians and debauch their womenfolk, leaving them with syphilis (?).⁵⁹ The specific abuses and trickeries exposed by Jaubarī in this fourth chapter of his relate to practices in certain churches and monasteries, in places like Jerusalem, Egypt and Cyprus, some of which Jaubarī witnessed personally. Suspended from the roof of the church of the Holy Sepulchre (*Kanīsat Qumāma*) in Jerusalem was a candelabrum, in which fire was miraculously kindled from heaven on certain days; in a monastery called Dair aṣ-Ṣanam was an iron idol, allegedly constructed by the sage Apollonius,⁶⁰ and suspended in mid-air by means of a magnetic stone; in a Coptic monas-

⁵⁸ Kutubī, *op. cit.*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, II, 348, No. 382, ed. 'Abbās, III, 291, No. 427.

⁵⁹ MS. ff. 23a-b, ed. Damascus, 38, ed. Cairo, 21. The term tentatively translated here as "syphilis" is *bārūk*; cf. the Egyptian Arabic antiphrastic term *mubārak* "blessed" for syphilis cited by R.B. Serjeant, "Notes on the 'Frankish chancre' (syphilis) in Yemen, Egypt and Persia", *JSS*, X (1965), 241.

⁶⁰ Whether Apollonius of Perge, the famous 3rd century B.C. mathematician and geometer, is meant, or whether there is meant Apollonius of Tyana, the more shadowy 1st century A.D. Pythagorean philosopher and thaumaturge, famed amongst the Muslims as a maker of talismans, *ṣāḥib aṭ-ṭilismāt*, is unclear. Considerable confusion about the two personages existed in the Muslim mind, see M. Plessner, *EI*² art. "Balīnūs", but Apollonius of Tyana was in fact regarded as the author of a *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* or *Kitāb as-Sab'a* on the allegorical aspects of alchemy, see the exhaustive discussion by F. Sezgin, *GAS*, IV, 77 ff.

stery at al-Abshīt in Egypt ⁶¹ were a series of secretly interconnected wells, in one of which the monks could make the water miraculously rise and fall and which supposedly had remarkable curative properties.⁶²

The whole of Jaubari's book is an enthralling commentary on the ingenuities of the human mind and the lengths to which it will travel in an endeavour to avoid honest work (although often, indeed, the beggar or thief works harder at his "non-honest" occupation than if he were in a more conventional job !); for the social historian of mediaeval Islam, few books would better repay a translation and extensive commentary. Various items from the rest of Jaubari's material will be noted, where appropriate, in the commentaries to the *Qaṣīda sāsāniyyas* of Abū Dulaf and Ṣafī d-Dīn. It will suffice here to close this consideration of the *Kaṣf al-asrār* by citing from it something about the techniques and stratagems of the criminal classes, in particular, the thieves and bandits, as expounded by Jaubarī, since this information supplements that given earlier and in a less detailed form by authors like Jāḥiẓ, Badī' az-Zamān and ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (see above).

The "smash and grab" thieves (*al-luṣūṣ al-hajjāmūn*) do not go to the lengths of the burglars who tunnel their way into houses, or break down or climb walls, but are content to make sudden raids into a house, snatching up what they can find. Consequently, they have various tricks for finding out whether there is anyone inside the house before they enter it. For instance, they may release a pigeon with clipped wings into a house in an alley, and then go after it. If someone is at home, they merely ask for the return of the bird; if the house is empty, they ransack it. Alternatively, they may send into the house a cat with a piece of meat in its jaws, alleging that the cat has taken the meat. With greater refinement, they may send in a seven or eight

⁶¹ Al-Abshīt was a village in the Gharbiyya province of the Delta, described in a Mamlūk geographical-fiscal work of the later 9th/15th century as possessing 1,940 feddāns and being worth 10,000 dinārs, see Sharaf ad-Dīn Yaḥyā, called Ibn al-Ji'ān, *Kitāb at-Tuḥfa as-saniyya bi-asmā' al-bilād al-miṣriyya*, ed. B. Moritz, (Cairo 1898), 71, and also Muḥammad Ramzī, *al-Qāmūs al-jughrāfī li-l-bilād al-miṣriyya min 'ahd qudamā' al-miṣriyyīn ilā sanat 1945* (Cairo 1953-68), II/2, 15.

⁶² MS. ff. 23b-26b (the end of this chapter is lacking in this manuscript, apparently because of a missing leaf or leaves), ed. Damascus, 38-42, ed. Cairo, 21-3 (in both these printed texts, the latter section of the chapter, on the image in a Cyprus monastery which could be manipulated to weep or to smile, is much curtailed).

years' old child, ostensibly fleeing from the wrath of a parent or guardian; the owner of the house may shelter the child for a while and at an opportune moment, the child makes off with anything it can lay its hands on.⁶³

The thieves who work by tunnelling into houses and by murderous assaults (*aṣḥāb an-nuqūb wa-l-qatl*) are much tougher eggs, quite ready to kill or be killed in the course of their criminal activities. They necessarily use quite complex tools and equipment, comprising a crowbar (*atala*), an iron spike or drill (*sikka*), a sheet of metal (*safiḥa*), an instrument for getting doors open without a key (*fashāsha*), an iron hand with claws (*kaff ḥadīd bi-aṣābiḥ ḥadīd*), presumably mounted on a shaft or handle. A ladder, a bag of sand and a small tortoise complete the basic items of the burglar's kit. The *sikka* and *kaff* are used for the work of breaking through walls, and the crowbar for forcing open doors; then once the breach is made, the burglar pokes a stick with a cloth on the end into the hole, because if he pokes his own head through the gap, his head might well be the target for the staff, club or sword of the houseowner lurking at the other end. The tortoise is employed thus. The burglar has with him a flint-stone and a candle about as big as a little finger. He lights the candle and sticks it on the tortoise's back. The tortoise is then introduced through the breach into the house, and it crawls slowly round, thereby illuminating the house and its contents. The bag of sand is used by the burglar when he has made his breach in the wall. From this bag, he throws out handfuls of sand at intervals, and if no-one stirs within the house, he then enters it and steals from it; apparently the object of the sand is either to waken anyone within the house when it is thrown down, or else to make a tell-tale crushing noise should any of the occupants

⁶³ MS. ff. 120b-121b, ed. Damascus, 154-5, ed. Cairo, 84 (section very curtailed in these two editions). A story in which a similar "distracter" (to use the term of 'Uthmān al-Khayyāṭ, sc. *shāghil*, see above, p. 105) figures, but in which the trick fails to work, is given by Tanūkhī in his *Nishwār al-muḥādāra*, Part VIII, ed. Margoliouth (Damascus 1348/1930), 133-5, tr. *idem*, "The table-talk of a Mesopotamian judge", *IC*, IV (1930), 535-6, in book form (Hyderabad, Deccan, N.D.), 107-8. Here, the "distracter" comes to the door of a rich banker's house in Baghdad posing as a blind beggar; an accomplice slips in meanwhile and hides himself in a privy in the vestibule till nightfall. But the owner of the house, fearing that an intruder might have gained access to the outer parts of the house, is ready for the band of thieves when they are let in during the night; he lays an ambush in the form of a deep, concealed pit in the inner courtyard of his house, captures them and puts them all to death.

stir within it. Also, the burglar may have with him some crusts of dry bread and beans. If he wishes to conceal his presence, or hide any noise he is making, he gnaws and munches these crusts and beans, so that the occupants of the house think that it is merely the cat devouring a rat or mouse. Then when all is quiet again, the burglar comes out and sets about his thieving. Jaubarī adds that he himself knows about 600 of the housebreakers' stratagems and tricks.⁶⁴

Lastly, as opposed to these urban criminals, there are those who operate out in the countryside and pasture grounds. These comprise the *mudāwirūn* ("those who go round in the company of someone"), who attach themselves to the nomadic Bedouins, Kurds and Turkmens in order to steal when opportunity arises; and the *sallālūn* ("those who extract, draw out, i.e. steal"), who specialise in driving off and stealing valuable, thoroughbred horses. One of the tricks of the *mudāwirūn* is to immobilise the watchdogs of a desert encampment by feeding them a sticky mixture of oil-dregs and hair-clippings, which clog their teeth and jam up their jaws and thus distract them from barking;⁶⁵ another is for the *mudāwir* to put on the skin of a fierce wild animal and go on all fours, thus frightening away the pasturing beasts and herdsmen. The *sallālūn* are a particularly hardy and bold group, quite ready to risk their necks. They are adept at dressing up as wandering minstrels, dervishes, smiths, preachers, etc., assuming the habits and skills of these professions to perfection. They are also very practiced in the use of files for filling down the tethering-chains of horses, of instruments for getting locks and clasps open (*fashāsha*), and of skeleton keys (*mafātīḥ jumla*). They are thus able to unloose noble steeds and ride off on them.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ MS. ff. 121b-123a, lacking in the printed texts.

⁶⁵ Damirī has a curious passage in his entry on the hyena (*ḍabu'*) in which he says: "If someone gets hold of an hyena's tongue with his right hand, the dogs will not bark at him or harm him; skilful operators amongst the bands of urban thugs (*ḥudhāq al-'ayyārīn*) follow that practice", see Muḥammad b. Mūsā ad-Damirī, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān* (Būlāq 1284/1867-8), II, 100. It seems that the reference here is to criminal elements who know how to silence watchdogs and guard dogs.

⁶⁶ MS. ff. 123a-b, lacking in the printed texts. Ar-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī mentions the activities of camel thieves, who were designated by the special term of *khurrāb*, sing. *khārīb*. In particular, he mentions the activities of one Shaibān b. Shihāb, who would creep up to a watering-place where camels were drinking, having with him a vessel full of camel ticks. He would then release the ticks amongst the camels, and when the afflicted beasts scattered, would seize the opportunity to steal what he could (*Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*, II, 108-9).

IV

The second important figure from the period preceeding that of Ṣafī d-Dīn al-Ḥillī and his *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, whose work is of relevance to our present purposes, is a somewhat older contemporary of Ṣafī d-Dīn, sc. Shams ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Dāniyāl al-Mauṣilī al-Khuzā'i al-Ḥakīm (ca. 646-710/ca. 1248-1310), whose name is linked with the Arabic shadow plays (*khayāl az-ẓill*). Ibn Dāniyāl moved from Mosul to Cairo, and practised there as an oculist; Ṣafadī, in his biography of him, says that he had a surgery inside the Bāb al-Futūḥ in Cairo and that he enjoyed an official allowance from the Mamlūk Sultans. He was also a littérateur, and Ṣafadī quotes quite extensively from his *qaṣīdas* and *muwashshaḥs*, indicating that he enjoyed some contemporary fame in this connection; indeed, he styles Ibn Dāniyāl "the Ibn al-Ḥajjāj of his age and the Ibn Sukkara⁶⁷ of his city", implying that some at least of his poetry was of the licentious variety.⁶⁸ He wrote his three shadow plays, the earliest of the genre extant today, under Sultan aẓ-Zāhir Baibars (658-76/1260-77). Stemming as he did from Mosul and from what was probably a Christian background, it is not impossible that Ibn Dāniyāl was aware of the ancient mime traditions of the Hellenised Christian Orient; Horovitz thought that the designation of the Amīr Wiṣāl (hero or dupe of the play *Taif al-khayāl* "Phantom of the imagination") as *Ṣāḥib ad-Dabbūs* "man with a club" was a reminiscence of the typical representation of the old mime-player as having a large, erect phallus.⁶⁹ The language of the shadow plays is basically a racy classical Arabic which veers at times towards the colloquial, and which also has passages in rhymed, artistic prose, according to the social status or pretensions of the characters involved.

⁶⁷ Sc. Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Hāshimī, called Ibn Sukkara, satirical poet of Baghdad, d. 385/995. Tha'ālībī cites his verses at length, and states that Ibn Sukkara and Ibn al-Ḥajjāj were the two literary luminaries of the age just as Jarīr and Farazdaq were for the Umayyad period. See *Yatimat ad-dahr*, III, 3-10; al-Khaṭīb, *Ta'rīkh Baghdād*, V, 465-6; and Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a'yān*, IV, 510-14, tr. III, 115-18.

⁶⁸ Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, III, 51-7. repeated in briefer form by Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd, II, 383-93, No. 398, ed. 'Abbās, III, 330-9, No. 443. For general information on Ibn Dāniyāl, see *GAL*, II², 8-9, Suppl. II, 1-2, and J.M. Landau, *EI²* s.v. The poetry quoted by Ṣafadī is harmless and conventional enough in its themes.

⁶⁹ *Spuren griechischer Mimen im Orient*, 28-9, cf. also, 5, 24.

Of special interest for our investigations into the literature on the Banū Sāsān and associated types is Ibn Dāniyāl's play *'Ajīb wa-Gharīb*, usually enumerated as the second of the three plays now surviving. *Faute de mieux*, the very indifferent text published by Ibrāhīm Ḥammāda in his *Khayāl az-ẓill wa-tamthīliyyāt Ibn Dāniyāl* (Cairo 1963) has been used as a basis for what is said in the following pages. This edition is uncritical and unscholarly, and the editor has made no recourse to parallel works which would have elucidated many difficult and unusual words. Worse still, he has expurgated the text, pruriently suppressing what he calls "corrupt, licentious verses referring to unnatural vice and exceptional evilness, and written in an unambiguous, low-class language" (*op. cit.*, 189). This is regrettable because it is precisely in these passages that we might expect to find employed jargon words of the Banū Sāsān common to the other texts reviewed by us above; fortunately, enough of these words have been left in Ḥammāda's text to show us that the play has a linguistic as well as a social-historical value (see further on this, below, pp. 124-5).

The pioneer investigator of the Turkish and Arabic shadow plays, the Erlangen scholar George Jacob, published extracts from the play in his *Stücke aus Ibn Dāniyāl's Taif al-hajāl* (Erlangen-Berlin 1910-12), 2. Heft, *Markttypen aus 'Ajīb wa-Garīb*, and 3. Heft, *Die Eröffnungsszene aus 'Ajīb wa-Garīb*, but does not seem ever to have produced a complete critical text. However, his detailed analysis of *'Ajīb wa-Gharīb*, "Ein ägyptischer Jahrmarkt im 13. Jahrhundert", *SBBAW*, Philos.-philol. u. hist. Klasse (1910), Abhandlung No. 10, pp. 1-42, based on three manuscripts (of which the first two go back to the 9th/15th century), is of high value as a control on Ḥammāda's text (which last is apparently based on the third of these manuscripts, a Cairo one in the Aḥmad Taimūr collection). Jacob's study is especially useful in that he frequently cites the Arabic of the original; his readings and interpretations are not surprisingly often superior to those of Ḥammāda. Finally, one should note the study of *'Ajīb wa-Gharīb* made by a further scholar interested over a long period in the Arabic shadow plays, Paul Kahle, sc. his "Muḥammad ibn Dāniyāl und sein zweites arabische Schattenspiel", in *Miscellanea Academica Berolinensis*, II/2 (1950), 151-67,⁷⁰

'Ajīb wa-Gharīb has virtually no plot, but passes before the audience

⁷⁰ Laudau in his *EI*² article gives a useful survey of secondary literature on the author and his plays.

a sucession of characters from the Egyptian market place: beggars, quacks, hucksters, mountebanks and so forth, all of them familiar to us from the earlier literature on the Banū Sāsān. The hero Gharīb (“stranger, wanderer in far-off lands”) resembles the leading figures of the *maqāmāt*, Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Iskandarī and Abu Zaid as-Sarūjī, in that all of them are travelling folk who have met misfortune and have come down in the world. At the outset, Gharīb steps forth and introduces himself as “Your servant, the wandering stranger, the love-lorn and broken-hearted one, whom yearning has reduced to an emaciated state, on whom separation has left its effect until he is hardly visible, whom the various countries of the world have buffeted successively, and who has travelled around with the revolving firmament in search of homeland and the fulfilment of desires”.⁷¹ This *Heimweh* and regret for better days is further expressed in pathetic verses, and the mood here is reminiscent of the *envoi* of Abū Dulaf’s *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, vv. 173 ff., in which Abū Dulaf laments his life spent perpetually wandering over the face of the earth without finding rest, and expresses his desire to settle down at last (see above, p. 94).

The theme is elaborated by Gharīb in further passages of prose and verse. In true Sāsānī fashion, he has wandered through the Islamic lands, Egypt, Syria and Iraq, living by his wits. He has slept rough, and in the cold weather has sought the warmth of the stokeholds of bath furnaces, as did Abū Dulaf’s beggars (v. 136) and as did Ṣafī d-Dīn in his guise as a Sāsānī (v. 66). In Gharīb’s own words,

You see me, when I sleep, with the ashes of the furnace as my bedding, keeping warm in this way, whilst my bowl is tucked beneath my cheek;

I warm myself at the fire, until you see my body streaked with soot, just like that of a lynx.

I.e. he uses his *kashkūl* or begging-bowl as a pillow to keep the heat from his head, and also places it there for safety’s sake, to prevent its being stolen; whilst the comparison of the soot-encrusted squatters in the stokeholds with the dark-striped lynx is almost exactly the same image as in Abū Dulaf’s poem, v. 136, where the beggars are compared to the panther (*namir*)⁷². One Ṣūfī shaikh of Jaubari’s and Ibn Dāniyāl’s

⁷¹ Hammāda, *Khayāl az-ẓill*, 189.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 192; Jacob, “Ein ägyptischer Jahrmakrt”, 8. The same verb *baqqa’a* “he stained, smeared [a thing] black” is used in both the verses of Abū Dulaf and of Gharīb, and because of Arabic vagueness about the exact zoological application of terms denoting animals, the *fahd* and the *namir* may be regarded here as referring to the same beast.

time was, indeed, known as “al-Qammīnī” or “al-Iqmīmī” because of his frequenting the stokeholds of baths (*qamānīn*, sing. *qammīn*, local Damascene form *iqmīm*; see on this term the notes to Abū Dulaf, *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, v. 153) and the dung heaps which formed the traditional fuel supply of baths; this Shaikh Yūsuf al-Qammīnī (d. 657/1259) haunted the bath of Nūr ad-Dīn in the old Sūq al-Qamḥ quarter of Damascus, wore long, sweeping robes, urinated in his clothes, rarely washed, and was venerated by the ignorant populace as a miracle-worker.⁷³ Likewise, in the Turkish counterpart of the Arabic shadow plays, the hero Karagöz haunts the stokeholds, and the term *külhanī* “frequenter of the stokehold ashes” has passed into standard Turkish as a term for vagabonds and street ruffians (see below, p. 165).⁷⁴

In the course of his journeyings, Gharīb has practised all the usual tricks and trades of the Sāsānis. He has practised magic and alchemy, and has written out charms for such purposes as drying up an enemy’s well. He has claimed to exercise power over the King of the Jinn and to have summoned up the Jinnīs Maiṭaṭrūn and ash-Shaiṣabān.⁷⁵

⁷³ Abū l-Fidā’ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-n-nihāya* (Cairo 1351-8/1932-9), XIII, 216-17; Shihāb ad-Dīn ‘Abd ar-Rahmān b. Ismā’īl, called Abū Shāma, *Tarājim rijāl al-qarnain, as-sādis wa-s-sābi*, ed. Muḥammad Zāhid al-Kautharī (Cairo 1366/1947), 202-3. Both these authors, a Ḥanbalī and a Shāfi’ī respectively, were, however, very hostile to Ṣūfism and its contemporary excesses.

⁷⁴ It is interesting to note that in Elizabethan England also, vagabonds and criminal elements congregated in similar warm places. In a letter of 1581 to the Queen’s chief minister Burghley, the Recorder of the City of London, William Fletewood, reported that the Savoy and the brick kilns near Islington were the chief haunts of rogues, and that he was taking steps to root them out from there (text in T. Wright, *Queen Elizabeth and her times, a series of original letters* ... [London 1838], II, 166).

⁷⁵ Jacob, *op. cit.*, 9, noted that the name Maiṭaṭrūn goes back to cabbalistic literature, and he stated that it was still used in magical rituals in parts of Muslim Africa. These two names Maiṭaṭrūn and ash-Shaiṣabān are not, in fact, meaningless pieces of mumbo-jumbo, but go back to ancient Jewish angelological literature, as my colleague Stefan Strelcyn has demonstrated in the following note. *Maiṭaṭrūn* is of uncertain origin, and looks non-Semitic in form, but it appears in Jewish and Aramaic texts in the sense of “protecting angel”, with a special position in esoteric doctrine from the Tannaitic period onwards, and comes to be regarded as a proper noun. See A. Kohut, *Über die jüdische Angelologie und Dämonologie in ihrer Abhängigkeit vom Parsismus*, in *Abd. für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, IV/3 (Leipzig 1866) 36-42; Ozair Yisrael, *a Hebrew encyclopedia* (New York 1951), VI, 162-3; *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, XI, cols. 1443-6; and W.H. Rossel, *A handbook of Aramaic magical texts* (Princeton 1953), 138, No. 430. Ash-Shaiṣabān, on the other hand, looks Semitic in form, and is actually directly derivable from Hebrew *šōšbīn*

He has preyed on the gullible by chewing soap, foaming at the mouth and thus feigning madness and epilepsy; he has stuck together his eyelids with olibanum resin (*'ilk al-lubān*) and feigned blindness; he has rubbed on his limbs thapsia or asafoetida (*diryās*, reading thus for Ḥammāda's *d.r.d.bās*⁷⁶) to make them swollen; and he has used the sternutatory plant root *kundus*⁷⁷ to induce weeping on account of his alleged reduction to penury. He further boasts of his skill in handling performing monkeys, bears, dogs and serpents in baskets, and at organising fights between cocks or rams.⁷⁸ Concerning his quack medical ministrations, he boasts,

I have treated people, and how many of them have I killed with my astringents and purges!

And I have given treatment for their eyes, and how many eyelids will never sleep any more after my application of kohl!⁷⁹

"best man, socius sponsi", used in post-Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic, including Syriac. See J. Levy, *Wörterbuch über die Talmud und Midraschim* (Darmstadt 1963), 527; G.H. Dalman, *Aramäisch-neuhebräisches Wörterbuch zu Targum, Talmud und Midrasch* (Frankfurt a.M. 1897), 399; J. Brun, *Dictionarium syriaco-latinum* (Beirut 1911), 665; and M. Marmorstein in *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, VI, col. 643, s.v. "Engel — die Schutz-Engel der Völker", "Beispiele für das Wirken der Engel in biblischer und nachbiblischer Zeit bringt die Agada in grosser Zahl. Wie erwähnt, berät sich Gott mit den E. vor der Schöpfung des Menschen ... Michael und Gabriel fungieren als שושבין (Brautführer) bei der Hochzeit Adams und Evas (R. Abbahu, Gen. r. 8, 15; Pirke R. El. 12 und 16) ..." It is not difficult to see how this common noun *šōšbīn* easily became a magical name referring to a specific angel, and in Muslim usage, to a *jinnī*.

⁷⁶ The term *diryās*, *adris* or *adiryās* was used in the Maghrib to denote thapsia, *Thapsia garganica*, and in the Islamic East to denote asafoetida = the Persian *anjūdān*; see Ibn al-Baiṭar, tr. Part 1, 34, 327-9, Nos. 28, 440, Part 3, 430, No. 2321, *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*, tr. 10-11, 113-14, Nos. 14, 255, and Siggel, *Wörterbuch*, 12.

⁷⁷ Because the term *kundus* or *qundus* seems to have been used by the Arab pharmacologists to denote more than one sternutatory, emetic and purgative root, the exact identification of the plant intended here is not certain. See Ibn al-Baiṭar, Part 2, 249-51, 487, Nos. 1179, 1610, Part 3, 121, 204-5, Nos. 1851, 1975 (who in one of these places gives to *kundus* the name *'ūd al-'uṭās* "sneeze-wood", and in several places inveighs against the practice of druggists in palming off a unsuspecting customers other herbs instead of genuine *kundus*), *Tuḥfat al-aḥbāb*, tr. 101, No. 225, and Siggel, *Wörterbuch*, 64.

⁷⁸ These contests were favourite diversions in the Islamic world, as in Christian Europe; the Abbasid Caliphs had special, salaried retainers at court for organising fights and training rams (the *kabbāshūn*), cocks (the *dayyākūn*) and fighting dogs (the *aṣḥāb kilāb al-hirāsh*), see Qāḍī Ibn az-Zubair, *Kitāb adh-Dhakhā'ir wa-t-tuḥaf*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥamidallāh (Kuwait 1959), 220.

⁷⁹ Ḥammāda, 189-96; Jacob, 6-10.

It was noted above that despite Ḥammāda's omission of the more scurrilous and coarse verses, enough has been left in his text to show the identity of many of the jargon words used in *'Aḡīb wa-Gharīb* with those terms familiar from Abū Dulaf and/or Ṣafī d-Dīn. Thus when Gharīb claims membership of the Banū Sāsān, he describes this group as "those whom the vicissitudes (literally, "infirmity") of time have reduced to a fixed resting-place, since they have been seduced by days of indolence and of bandying speech and storytelling (*ad-dānik wa-t-tillāgh*, reading thus for Ḥammāda's meaningless *al-qilāgh*), by excessive wine drinking (*ṣamy*) when already suffering from a hangover or when sober, and by passion for slender, beardless boys (*ṣahw as-samāqūn al-kīf*)".⁸⁰ Here and in the subsequent passages describing his past exploits as a Sāsānī, we have many jargon terms, knowledge of whose antecedents not infrequently helps in emending Ḥammāda's text, as in the case above of *tillāgh* for *q.lāgh*.⁸¹ Some of the terms can be traced back nearly four centuries to Abū Dulaf's *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, e.g. *samqūn*, *ṣamy* and *mufakkik* "escapologist, man who wriggles out of chains or bonds".⁸² There also occurs in Gharīb's speech the word *kudd*, apparently the masculine form of Abū Dulaf's *kudda* "female beggar, beggar's wife".⁸³ The occurrence more than once of the coupling *as-samqūn wa-l-kudd* must refer to the relationship of the master-beggar and his apprentice, familiar from the literature on the Banū Sāsān, e.g. in Abū Dulaf, vv. 115 ff.

However, the majority of the jargon terms here are familiar from the poem of Ibn Dāniyāl's near-contemporary Ṣafī d-Dīn only, or if they occur in Abū Dulaf, are also found in Ṣafī d-Dīn and had clearly found a permanent place in the vocabulary of beggars and rogues, e.g. *samqūn*, *kudd*, *ṣamy* and *habr* "the act of sharing out the proceeds of begging", found in *'Aḡīb wa-Gharīb* in the verbal form *hābara*.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Ḥammāda, 191-2, cf. Jacob, 7.

⁸¹ The verb *tallagha* "he talked, asserted" occurs three times, and the *maṣdar* or verbal noun form *tillāgh* once in Ṣafī d-Dīn, vv. 15, 26, 36; the verb *dannaka* "he asserted, claimed" and related nominal forms occurs in *ibid.*, vv. 2 and *passim*.

⁸² Abū Dulaf, vv. 15, 40, 86, 119, 130; also in Ṣafī d-Dīn, vv. 11, 21.

⁸³ Abū Dulaf, v. 141; also in Ṣafī d-Dīn, vv. 45, 57. Jacob mistakenly followed one of his manuscripts against the other two and read *al-k.m.d* instead of *al-k.dd*, which must be the correct reading. (One might think of Abū Dulaf's *kammād(h)*, glossed as *nayyāk* "one who copulates a great deal" (v. 25), but there is no mention of an *alif* in the second syllable of the word.)

⁸⁴ For *habr*, see Abū Dulaf, v. 42, and Ṣafī d-Dīn, v. 35; and for *hābara*, Ṣafī d-Dīn, v. 3.

The jargon of the shadow play thus substantially reflects the slang that must have been current in the 7th/13th and early 8th/14th centuries as known to us *par excellence* from Ṣafī d-Dīn's poem. Amongst the terms common to Ibn Dāniyāl and Ṣafī d-Dīn, one may cite those of the phrase "and we [sc. Gharīb and the Banū Sāsān] have gained for ourselves *al-murūd wa-l-marāqīn wa-l-tubūk / wa-t-tunūk* (Ḥammāda has here *al-bunūk*, sic)", i.e. dirhams, dinārs and *fulūs*, copper coins;⁸⁵ *marqān* is found, it is true, in both Abū Dulaf, v. 100, and Ṣafī d-Dīn, v. 3, but *mard* and *tabk/tank* are found only in the latter, vv. 3, 16, 26, 68. The curious word *kazākī* (Ṣafī d-Dīn, vv. 6, 65), of no obvious etymology but glossed as "governors, rulers", seems to have this meaning nevertheless confirmed in Gharīb's phrase *sawwadtu kazākīya li-t-tarbīkh* (Ḥammāda, *tarbīḥ*, erroneously) *tud'ā mawāliyyā* "I have written eulogies of governors which are called *mawāliyyā*"(?).⁸⁶ Ṣafī d-Dīn's verb *hankama 'alā* "he gathered together round someone" (v. 5, cf. also the nominal form *hankām* "assembly, circle of onlookers", *ibid.*, v. 56) is paralleled by Gharīb's phrase *wa-hankamtu bi-Miṣr wa-l-'Irāq wa-sh-Shām* "I have gathered together an audience in Egypt, Iraq and Syria".⁸⁷

In chapter III above we saw how frequently the Sāsānis assumed a cloak of religion in furtherance of their money-raising activities, and how, in particular, they took up the rôles of preacher and popular story teller. Gharīb's partner and foil in the play is 'Ajīb ad-Dīn al-Wā'iz ("the man with a remarkable faith, the preacher"), who is, like Karagöz's partner Hajivad, a representative of the literate classes. 'Ajīb ad-Dīn delivers homilies on the *ubi sunt* motif and on the virtues of almsgiving, piety and continence; one of the phrases in his sermon,

⁸⁵ Ḥammāda, 193.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 192. The *mawāliyyā* or *marwāl* (pl. *mawāwīl*) is a form of uninflected popular verse, analogous to other verse forms such as the *zajal*, the *qūmā* and the *kān wa-kān*. It had a strophic form, comprising originally four hemistiches in a flexible *baṣīṭ* metre and with a common rhyme, either consonantal or vocalic; tradition ascribes to it an origin in Iraq either at Wāsiṭ or at Baghdad. Ṣafī d-Dīn himself collected together an anthology of popular poetry in all four of the verse forms mentioned above, the *Kitāb al-'Āṭil al-ḥālī wa-l-murakkhaṣ al-ghālī*; this has been edited by W. Hoenerbach, *Die vulgärarabische Poetik al-Kitāb al-'Āṭil al-Ḥālī wal-Muraḥḥas al-Gālī des Ṣafīyaddīn Ḥillī* (Wiesbaden 1956), see his Introduction, 23 ff., for a thorough study of the *mawāliyyā* form (the *ET* article, by Moh. Bencheneb, is rather cursory). The word *tarbīkh* is a jargon one, occurring in Ṣafī d-Dīn's *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, vv. 1 and *passim*, with the meaning "the act of improving, perfecting, exalting".

⁸⁷ Ḥammāda, 193.

[*ta'manū min al-iflās wa-d-dain*], *fa-ṣiḥḥat al-'ain bi-insānihā wa-ṣiḥḥat al-insān bi-l-'ain*,⁸⁸ was connected by Jacob with St. Luke, xi. 34, "Your eye is the lamp of your body; when your eye is sound, your whole body is full of light; but when it is not sound, your body is full of darkness" (RSV), as possibly indicative of Ibn Dāniyāl's probable Christian background.⁸⁹

The other characters of the play are all familiar types. Ḥunaish al-Ḥawwā'⁹⁰ ("little serpent, the snake-charmer") describes the different types of deadly snake which he has in his baskets, and also the antidotes against their bites, and the ingredients of these drugs, which he has in his medicine chest (cf. Abū Dulaf, vv. 92-8).⁹¹ 'Usaila al-Ma'ājīnī ("little drop of honey, the druggist") is the concocter and dispenser of pills and remedies (*ma'jūn*, pl. *ma'ājīn*, literally "what is kneaded or mixed together", applied equally to therapeutic drugs and to narcotic ones with constituents like opium and hashish⁹²). Often he employs costly ingredients like powdered pearls or coral, but is content to receive in payment merely a date or a little cucumber

⁸⁸ Jacob translated this aphorism as "Die Gesundheit des Auges beruht ja auf der des Menschen und die Gesundheit des Menschen auf der des Auges" ("Ein ägyptischer Jahrmarkt", 11). This, however, is a superficial translation; it ignores the wealth of allusiveness and polysemanticism inherent in such words as *'ain* and *insān*, and ignores the paronomasia, the *jīnās tāmm*, between the two component phrases. In the light of the previous phrase, "Keep yourself from reduction to bankruptcy and from running into debt", I would suggest that the translation should more feasibly run "The condition of the eye depends on the condition of its pupil, and the status of a man depends on his wealth". If we translate thus, the resemblance to St. Luke's words (see below) becomes less striking.

⁸⁹ Jacob, 10-12; Ḥammāda, 196-8. Jacob later devoted a special study to this character of Ibn Dāniyāl's, "Agīb ed-Dīn al-wā'iz bei Ibn Dāniyāl", *Der Islam*, IV (1913), 67-71, see also H. Reckendorff, "Zur Ḥuṭbe 'Agīb addins", *ibid.*, 324-5.

⁹⁰ Reading thus for the Ḥuwaish al-Ḥawwā' of Jacob and the Ḥuwais al-Ḥawwi of Ḥammāda.

⁹¹ Ḥammāda, 199-201; Jacob, 12-14.

⁹² F. Rosenthal, *The herb, hashish versus medieval Muslim society*, 31, cf. also 133, cites a 10th/16th century treatise, the *Qam' al-wāshīn fī dhamm al-barrāshīn*, in which *barsh*, clearly a compound drug containing narcotics, is denounced as "the evil paste", *al-ma'jūn al-khabūth*. Edward Lane, *An account of the manners and customs of the modern Egyptians*, 348, in ch. xiv "Use of tobacco, coffee, hemp, opium, etc.", says that in his time in Egypt various conserves containing hellebore, opium, cannabis, etc., were made up and sold by the *ma'jūnjīs*. The term *ma'jūn* is still one of those used in contemporary Egypt for such concoctions as confectionery, honey and dried fruit mixed with hashish resin, see Sami-Ali, *Le haschisch en Egypte, essai d'anthropologie psychanalytique* (Paris 1971), 14.

(cf. Ṣafī d-Dīn, vv. 27-32). He drums up customers by proclaiming, "Where is the man who is suffering from stomach acidity, or from kidney stones? Where is the man who is afflicted with sexual impotence? And show me the person suffering from colic or an intestinal obstruction (ileus, *ilāwus*), or from strangury of urine ...".⁹³

Nubāta al-ʿAshshāb ("sprig or stripling, the herbalist") is a confrère of the druggist, being more specifically a herbalist (*ushb* "herbs, green vegetation"). He calls himself "the successor of Dioscorides and the descendant of Ibn al-Baiṭar", and enumerates a series of drugs and preparations, with special emphasis on the mandrake root and its alleged remarkable characteristic of possessing a male and female form (the high value placed on the mandrake root is similarly emphasised by Ṣafī d-Dīn, v. 28).⁹⁴ Miqdām al-Āsī ("he who presses forward, the surgeon") is a quack surgeon, describing himself in one of his verses as *ṣāḥib al-mabādī wa-l-mawāṣī* "the man with lancets and razors" (cf. Abū Dulaf, v. 99). He bears a battery of fearsome-looking instruments, such as scalpels, cauterising irons, syringes, bone-cutting saws, etc.; and his speech ends with the humorous verse,

Whenever I make someone blind who could formerly see, I tell him, "It was the iron that blinded you!"⁹⁵

Responsible for one of the specialist functions of the surgeon is the cupping-woman, *aṣ-Ṣānī'a*.⁹⁶

Ḥassūn al-Mauzūn ("goldfinch, the balancing artist") walks on tightropes (cf. Abū Dulaf, vv. 127-8) and barefoot on sword points, and among his exploits are mentioned *daulāb al-hawā'* (pirouetting, or turning somersaults, on a tightrope or in some similar high place?), and walking on his hands and standing on his head; he is accompanied by his master (*Mu'allim*).⁹⁷ his confrère is Waththāb ("the leaper, springer") al-Bakhtiyārī (hence probably a Kurd, a race frequently mentioned as prominent amongst brigands and thieves and other predatory elements of the Banū Sāsān, cf. Jāḥiẓ, cited above, p. 34, and Ṣafī d-Dīn, v. 15, comm.), who performs by swinging from ropes in

⁹³ Ḥammāda, 201-2; Jacob, 14-15.

⁹⁴ Ḥammāda, 202-4; Jacob, 15-16.

⁹⁵ Ḥammāda, 204-5; Jacob, 16-17.

⁹⁶ Ḥammāda, 216-17; Jacob, 26.

⁹⁷ Ḥammāda, 205-7; Jacob, 17-18.

mid-air.⁹⁸ These gymnasts are clearly of the type described by Lane under the appellation of *Bahluwānīs* "those who exhibit feats of strength and dexterity" (< Persian *pahlavān* "hero, champion"), who during his time in Egypt were gypsies; their performance characteristically took the shape of dancing on or walking along tightropes, these ropes being often tied to the minarets of mosques and supported at intervals by posts.⁹⁹

Sham'ūn al-Musha'bidh ("Simon the juggler or conjuror") and his companion (*rafiq*) do slight-of-hand and similar tricks, such as turning a piece of rope into a snake, sand into corn, or a citron into a duck.¹⁰⁰ The astrologer is called Hilāl ("crescent moon") al-Munajjim, and comes in with his equipment, comprising his book of prognostications, his sand-tray (*takht ar-raml*, sc. for geomancy), his stool and his astrolabe; in the course of his astrological patter he quotes the views of the celebrated astronomer of Baghdad, Abū Ma'shar al-Balkhī (d. 272/886, the Albumasar of the mediaeval Europeans).¹⁰¹ Closely connected with the astrologer's fortune-telling function is the man who writes out amulets, 'Awwādh ash-Sharmāṭ (thus Jacob, whereas Ḥammāda has "al-Qarāmiṭī"; for 'awwādh "writer of amulets", cf. 'ūdha, ta'wīdh, mi'wadh "amulet, charm", and for sarmāṭa and qarmāṭa "he wrote out [a charm], cf. Abū Dulaf, v. 76, and Ṣafī d-Dīn, vv. 35, 42). He peers into his divining mirror and inscribes a magic circle (*mandal*, cf. Ṣafī d-Dīn, vv. 33-4), and stages the spectacular cure of an epileptic boy, driving out the possessing demons and jinn by the Hebrew formula 'ehyeh 'ašer 'ehyeh "I am who I am", if the spirits are Judaists, by the Greek formula 'Εν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος "In the beginning was the Word", if they are Christian, and by the invocation of fire and light, darkness and heat, if they are Magians.¹⁰²

Those concerned with performing animals — and Gharib boasts that he himself is one of them — comprise various subdivisions. They include Shibl as-Sabbā' ("lion cub, the tamer of wild beasts"),

⁹⁸ Ḥammāda, 223-4; Jacob, 32-3.

⁹⁹ *Op. cit.*, 394, in ch. xx "Serpent-charmers, and performers of legerdemain tricks, etc."

¹⁰⁰ Ḥammāda, 207-8; Jacob, 18.

¹⁰¹ Ḥammāda, 208-10; Jacob, 18-21.

¹⁰² Hammada, 210-14; Jacob, 21-4; the references in the Hebrew and Greek formulae being of course to Exodus, iii. 14, and St. John, i. 1. It was popularly believed, on the basis of Qur'ān, lxxii. 11, that the Jinn comprised believers and unbelievers, and belonged to various faiths, see Hughes, *A dictionary of Islām*, 133-8, art. "Genii".

who comes in with a lion, led on a chain and in an iron collar;¹⁰³ Mubārak al-Fayyāl ("the blessed one, the elephant trainer"), who leads in his elephant, all the while shouting in pseudo-Indian speech;¹⁰⁴ Abū l-'Ajab ("bringer of wonders"), who has a performing goat which does tricks, almost exactly like those witnessed by Lane five centuries later,¹⁰⁵ with the aid of a stool and a block of wood;¹⁰⁶ Abū l-Qiṭaṭ ("the man with cats"), who belongs to that class of trainers who get cats and mice to live amicably together, cf. Ṣafī d-Dīn, v. 52, and Jaubari's *Kashf al-asrār*, cited above, p. 110;¹⁰⁷ Zaghbar al-Kalbī ("the white-haired one,¹⁰⁸ the dog trainer"), who has a troop of dogs which dance to the tambourine and flute;¹⁰⁹ Abū l-Waḥsh ("the man with the wild beast"), who has a dancing bear;¹¹⁰ and Maimūn al-Qarrād ("ape, the monkey trainer"), who appears with a *nasnās* and a long-tailed dancing monkey dressed in a veil and pointed cap, making it perform just as Abū l-Faṭḥ al-Iskandarī makes his monkey dance in Badī' az-Zamān's twentieth *maqāma*, the *Qirdiyya* one.¹¹¹

¹⁰³ Ḥammāda, 214-15; Jacob, 24.

¹⁰⁴ Ḥammāda, 215-16; Jacob, 24-5.

¹⁰⁵ Sc. with the beasts standing on blocks of wood, see *An account of the manners and customs of the modern Egyptians*, 395, in ch. xx.

¹⁰⁶ Ḥammāda, 216; Jacob, 25.

¹⁰⁷ Ḥammāda, 218-19; Jacob, 27. The character of Abū l-Qiṭaṭ is interesting in that its survival in the Egyptian shadow plays is attested down to the early 18th century and even into the 19th century. Thus Abū l-Qiṭaṭ or ar-Rikhim appears in the fragment of a shadow play in Cairene colloquial Arabic, dating from ca. 1118/1706-7, published by P. Kahle, "Marktszene aus einem ägyptischen Schattenspiel", *ZA*, XXVII (1912), 92-102, at p. 96. The fragment is of interest in that as in 'Ajīb wa-Gharīb, various figures from the market place pass before the audience, such as the water-carrier (*saqqa*), the seller of lupin seed (*tarāmisī*), of oxymel (*uqsīmāwī*), of sweetmeats (*ḥalwānī*), of confectionery (*kaḥkī*), etc.

¹⁰⁸ Thus interpreted by Jacob; the lexica give the primary meaning of *zagħbar* as "nap of a piece of cloth or garment" which could, one imagines, be applied to the close-cropped, white hair of an old man. The word has, however, a further, botanical meaning, denoting the shrubby marjoram or origanum, see Ibn al-Baiṭar, tr. *Traité des simples*, Part 2, 212, No. 1113.

¹⁰⁹ Ḥammāda, 219-20; Jacob, 27-8.

¹¹⁰ Ḥammāda, 220-1; Jacob, 28.

¹¹¹ Ḥammāda, 222-4; Jacob, 31-2. E. Graefe, G. Jacob, P. Kahle and E. Littman also wrote a special article on the monkey trainer, "Der Qarrād", *Der Islam*, V (1914), 93-106. Concerning the *nasnās*, Arabic authors describe it variously, but usually as being half-human, half-animal (the human attributes given to it probably influenced by the resemblance of the words *nasnās* and *nās* "people") and as resembling the species of Jinn known to the Bedouins as *shiqq*. See the definitions of the lexica, e.g. *TA*, IV, 257-8,

The remaining characters include the black Sudanese Nātū, concerning whom Jacob wrote a special study;¹¹² Shadqam al-Ballā' ("the wide-mouthed one, the swallower"), is a swallower of swords and such-like, and comes in with a sword, a plough-iron, a lance and a spear-head;¹¹³ Jarrāḥ al-Mutabbal ("the curer of wounds or surgeon, the one frenzied by unrequited love") mutilates himself on account of unrequited love;¹¹⁴ and 'Assāf al-Ḥādī ("the one who traverses the desert, not knowing the right direction, the one who drives the camels along by his chanting to them") collects money for performing the Pilgrimage (cf. Jāḥiẓ's *Muqaddis*, above, p. 40).¹¹⁵ Finally, one of the most interesting of Ibn Dāniyāl's figures is Jammār al-Mashā'īlī ("he who bears burning coals, the torch bearer", thus in Jacob; in Ḥammāda, he is given as Ḥammāl al-Mashā'īl "He who carries torches"). The *mashā'īlī* was properly the nightwatchman, the lamplighter and bearer of glowing embers on the end of a pole and used for illumination.¹¹⁶ However, his functions were enlarged — and debased in the social scale — to embrace the general duty of scavenging and keeping the streets clean,

and also Mas'ūdi's passage on the *nasnās* in *Murūj aḥd-dhahab*, IV, 10-16; he was sceptical about their existence. Popular belief placed the haunts of the *nasnās* in desert regions like Central Asia and the thinly-populated parts of Arabia like Ḥaḍramaut and al-Aḥsā. See Mas'ūdi, *op. cit.*, IV, 12-15, and the Seljuq author Marwazī, who relates an encounter in al-Aḥsā with a group of *nasnās* who had human bodies which were, however, covered in soft fur, and who made speech-like but unintelligible noises (*Sharaf al-Dīn Ṭāḥir Marwazī on China, the Turks and India*, ed. and tr. Minorsky, ch. on the Ḥabasha, § 20, pp. 59-60). Maimūn al-Qarrād's *nasnās* must have been some sort of anthropoid ape. In the modern Arabic of e.g. Egypt and Syria, *nasnās* simply denotes "ape".

That the figure of the animal trainer remained a stock one in the Egyptian shadow play is shown by the appearance of the figures of a tethered lion and its master in the collection of modern shadow play figures made out of leather and put together by Paul Kahle in the early years of this century; see his "Islamische Schattenspielfiguren aus Egypten. II. Teil", *Der Islam*, II (1911), 175-6.

¹¹² Ḥammāda, 220-1; Jacob, 28-39; *idem*, "Der Nātū und sein Leid bei Ibn Dāniyāl", *Der Islam*, I, (1910), 178-82.

¹¹³ Ḥammāda, 221-2; Jacob, 30-1.

¹¹⁴ Ḥammāda, 224-5; Jacob, 24. Although the classical lexica give only *matbūl* or *mutbal* as the participle "frenzied, worn to a shadow by unrequited love", this must clearly be the sense required here for *mutabbal* also (not "spiced"!).

¹¹⁵ Ḥammāda, 229-30; Jacob, 41-2.

¹¹⁶ Technically called a *sha'la*, described by Lane, *op. cit.*, 134, ch. iv "Government", as still in use in his time, and as carried about at night time by the *sha'lajī* or torchbearer = the older *mashā'īlī*.

emptying out cesspools and parading in public condemned criminals.¹¹⁷ They were thus accounted a pariah class, to be equated with the *zabbālūn* or dung collectors and cleaners of cesspits, and practitioners of noisome trades like tanning. Here in '*Ajīb wa-Gharīb* Jammār describes in a long *rajaz* poem how he alters his begging techniques according to whether he is addressing a Muslim, Christian or Jew, but he also proclaims the importance of his profession to the community,

We are the noble ones amongst mankind, we are never grudging of what we possess,

Our flaming brands are raised high, in the lowlands of the earth and in the mountains,

and concludes by proudly asserting, in terms reminiscent of the boasts of Abū Dulaf's beggars, the connection of the *mashā'ilīs* with the Banū Sāsān and their royal antecedents,

We are the descendants of Sāsān, of their richly-arrayed kings.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Cf. I.M. Lapidus, *Muslim cities in the later Middle Ages*, 83, and also 270, where numerous references in the Mamlūk sources to the *mashā'ilīyya* are listed.

¹¹⁸ Ḥammāda, 225-9; Jacob, 35-41.

CHAPTER FIVE

ŞAFĪ D-DĪN AL-ḤILLĪ AND HIS *QASĪDA SĀSĀNIYYA*

I

Abū l-Maḥāsin ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Sarāyā al-Ḥillī aṭ-Ṭā’ī as-Sinbisī, called Şafī d-Dīn, was born at Ḥilla in central Iraq in Rabi‘ II 677/August 1278, and died at Baghdad, most probably in 750/1349; he lived therefore a generation or so after Muḥammad b. Dāniyāl. His native town Ḥilla (“the halting-place, encampment”) had been founded by the Mazyadids of the Banū Asad soon after they had acquired the existing settlement on the Euphrates of al-Jāmi‘ain, so that Ḥilla gradually took over the older site and overlaid its very name. Since al-Jāmi‘ain/Ḥilla was an important crossing-point over the river, where the road came from Baghdad to Kūfa and the Arabian Desert, it prospered exceedingly, especially under the great Amīr Saif ad-Daula Şadaqa b. Maṣṣūr (479-501/1086-1108), called *Malik al-‘Arab*, after whom the town was often called *al-Ḥilla as-Saifiyya*.¹

The Mazyadids, like many of the Arab tribes of the Syrian Desert fringes, were Shī‘ī, and Ḥilla became an important centre of Twelver Shī‘ism, producing many Imāmī theologians, lawyers and other scholars, such as the theologians Shams ad-Dīn Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥasan, called Ibn al-Biṭriq (d. 602/1203) and Jamāl ad-Dīn Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Asadi, called Ibn Fahd (752-841/1351-1437).² Ibn Baṭṭūṭa visited Ḥilla during Şafī d-Dīn’s lifetime (apparently in the late thirteen-

¹ See G. Makdisi, “Notes on Ḥilla and the Mazyadids in mediaeval Islam”, *JAOS*, LXXIV (1954), 249-62, and ‘Abd al-Jabbār Nāji, *al-Imāra al-Mazyadiyya, dirāsa fī waq‘ihā as-siyāsī wa-l-iqtisādī wa-l-ijtimā‘ī* 387-558 h. (Basra N.D. [1971]), 59 ff. It is surprising that J. Lassner in his *EI*² art. “al-Ḥilla” repeats all the old errors concerning the town’s foundation which have been corrected by Makdisi, and makes no reference to his article.

² See on these two scholars, Mīrẓā Muḥammad Bāqir al-Mūsawī al-Khwānsārī, *Raḍāt al-jannāt fī aḥwāl al-‘ulamā’ wa-s-sādāt* (Tehran 1390-3/1970-3), I, 71-5, 191; Āghā Buzurg Ṭīhrānī, *Kitāb adh-Dharī‘a ilā taṣānīf ash-Shī‘a* (Najaf-Tehran 1355-92/1936-72), II, 148, XV, 10 and *passim*; Muḥsin al-Amīn al-Āmilī, *A’yān ash-Shī‘a* (Beirut-Damascus 1356-74/1937-55), X, 86-93; Shaikh ‘Abbās al-Qummī, *al-Kunā wa-l-alqāb* (Najaf 1389-90/1969-70), I, 226-7, 380-1; *GAL*, Suppl. I, 710-11, II, 210.

twenties) whilst en route for Karbalā' and Baghdad. He describes the famous bridge of boats which carried the road to the south, and also the fervent Shī'ism of its population. The Shī'a there had a mosque which they called the "Sanctuary of the Master of the Age" (i.e. of the Awaited Imām), from where they expected the Hidden Imām to re-appear, and to which a solemn procession of townspeople was held every evening, calling for the Imām's speedy coming.³

It was into this strongly Shī'i atmosphere that Şafī d-Dīn was born, into a leading family called the Banū Maḥāsin which had long traditions of religious leadership, public service and scholarship in Ḥilla. As the poet's *nisbas* show, the family traced its descent from the South Arab tribe of Ṭayyi' and its component clan of Sinbis,⁴ a tribe within which Shī'ism had been influential for centuries. Şafī d-Dīn shows himself in his poetry as an enthusiastic Shī'i but not a *ghālī*, extremist one. His *Dīwān* contains poems in praise of the Ahl al-Bait, poems referring to the Prophet's alleged designation of 'Alī as his *waṣī* or spiritual executor on the Day of Ghadīr Khumm and so forth,⁵ but he was nevertheless perfectly happy to spend the greater part of his adult life at the courts of strongly Sunnī rulers like the Artuqids, the Ayyūbids and the Mamlūks.⁶

■ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Rihla*, ed. and tr. Defrémery and Sanguinetti, II, 96-9, tr. Gibb, *The travels of Ibn Baṭṭūṭa A.D. 1325-1354*, II, 324-5.

⁴ Cf. Ibn Duraid, *Kitāb al-Ishṭiqāq*, ed. 'Abd as-Salām Muḥammad Ḥārūn (Cairo 1378/1958), 390.

⁵ One finds biographical notices consecrated to Şafī d-Dīn in later Shī'i works, such as 'Abd al-Ḥusain Aḥmad al-Āminī an-Najafī, *al-Ghadīr fī-l-Kitāb wa-s-sunna wa-l-adab*³ (Beirut 1387/1967), VI, 39-54, giving *inter alia* the text of Şafī d-Dīn's long *Qasīda Ghadīriyya* (= *Dīwān*, ed. Damascus, 52-4, ed. Najaf, 50-2); Khwānsārī, *Rauḍāt al-jannāt*, II, 183; and Āmilī, *A'yān ash-Shī'a*, XXXVI, 294. Also, his various poetical works are listed in Āghā Buzurg Ṭihirānī's *Dharī'a*, *passim*.

■ Considering his great contemporary fame as a poet, and the fact that he lived in an age of great biographical compilations, the sources on Şafī d-Dīn's life are remarkably exiguous and, above all, lacking in firm dates; even the year of his death is not known with complete certainty, see below, p. 138. The biography in Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *ad-Durar al-kāmina* (Hyderabad 1348-50/1299-31), II, 369-71, is brief but useful, whereas that in Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt*, ed. 'Abd al-Ḥamid I, 579-94, No. 242, ed. 'Abbās, II, 335-50, No. 286, is quite long, but being composed almost wholly of poetic citations, is very uninformative. The volume of Şafādī's *al-Wāfī bi-l-wafayāt* which contains a biography of Şafī d-Dīn is so far unpublished. Of secondary studies, there is the monograph by Jawād Aḥmad 'Alwash, *Shī'r Şafī d-Dīn al-Ḥillī* (Baghdad 1379/1959), based on a Baghdad University M.A. thesis, but lacking explicit documentation, at least in its printed form; it has nevertheless proved useful in the writing of this chapter. The short

Iraq was at this time under the rule of the Mongol Il-Khanids, the epigoni of Chingiz Khan's grandson Hülegü, whose yoke does not seem to have been felt as heavy in Ḥilla at least. Ḥilla and the other Shī'i regions of lower Iraq had freely submitted to Hülegü in 657-8/1259-60, so that Shī'ism there had enjoyed a comparatively privileged status, even though the first Il-Khanids were not Muslims.⁷ Indeed, it was from a famous Shī'i 'ālim of Ḥilla, Jamāl ad-Dīn Abū Maṣṣūr al-Ḥasan b. Yusuf (648-726/1250-1325), called al-'Allāma al-Ḥillī from his scholarly fame, and the author of the authoritative work on Imāmī theology, *al-Bāb al-ḥādī 'ashar*, that the Il-Khanid Muḥammad Khudābanda Öljeitü (703-16/1304-16) received instruction in Shī'i tenets when he decided to adhere to that sect.⁸

Hence Ḥilla was left largely to its own devices, and this gave free play in the 8th/14th century to internal factiousness. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa mentions two parties amongst the Ḥilla Shī'a, the so-called "Kurds" and the "Men of the two mosques", *Ahl al-Jāmi'ain*, who were perpetually contending for primacy in the town.⁹ It was this internecine strife which eventually led Şafī d-Dīn to leave his home and seek his fortune outside Iraq altogether. His maternal uncle Şafī d-Dīn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān b. Ḥamza b. Maḥāsīn had been murdered in his own mosque in Ḥilla by the rival Abū l-Faḍl family towards the end of Ghazan Khan's reign. In this atmosphere of assassination and vendetta, Şafī d-Dīn feared for his own safety, so he decided to journey northwards to the court of the Artuqids at Mārdīn in Diyārbakr (701/1301-2).

The Artuqids, descendants of Artuq b. Ekseb, were a Turkmen dynasty established in Diyārbakr at the end of the 5th/11th century

study by Maḥmūd Rizq Salīm, *Şafī d-Dīn al-Ḥillī*, in the series *Nawābiḡh al-fikr al-'arabī*, No. 27 (Cairo 1960), is a useful sketch of the poet's work, but without any scholarly pretensions. There are also brief articles in *EI*¹ s.v. "al-Ḥillī, Şafī 'l-Dīn" (Cl. Huart), in Ziriklī, *al-A'lam*², IV, 141, and in 'Abbās al-Qummi's *al-Kunā wa-l-alqāb*, II, 421-3; see also Nicholson, *A literary history of the Arabs*, 449-50, and *GAL*, II², 205-6, Suppl. II, 199-200.

⁷ See B. Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran. Politik, Verwaltung und Kultur der Ilchanzeit 1220-1350* (Leipzig 1939), 242-4.

⁸ See Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, II, 57 ff., tr. Gibb, II, 302 ff.; Ibn Hajar, *ad-Durar al-Kāminā*, II, 71-2; Āmili, *A'yān ash-Shī'a*, XXIV, 291-3; Goldziher, "Beiträge zur Literaturgeschichte der Šī'a und der sunnitischen Polemik", *SBWA W*, LXXVIII (1874), 467 ff.; Spuler, *op. cit.*, 243-4; *EI*² art. "al-Ḥillī, Djamāl al-Dīn Ḥasan" (S.H.M. Jafri).

⁹ *Riḥla*, II, 97, tr. II, 324-5. The designation *Ahl al-Jāmi'ain* must be a reminiscence of the ancient name of Ḥilla, by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa's time obsolete by nearly three centuries, see Makdisi, *op. cit.*, 258-9.

under the aegis of the Seljuqs.¹⁰ As the power of the Great Seljuqs waned, the Artuqids gradually acquired sovereign power over such important towns of Diyârbakr as Âmid, Ḥiṣn Kaifâ, Mârdîn and Mayyâ-fâriqîn. However, their authority was gradually attenuated by the rise of the Zangids and Ayyûbids, so that by the second half of the 7th/13th century they were reduced to Mârdîn, held in vassalage from Hülegü and his successors, from whom they received such insignia of authority as the crown and the ceremonial parasol (*chatr*, *miḡalla*).¹¹

When Şafî d-Dîn arrived in Mârdîn, the Artuqid principality was in a flourishing state under al-Malik al-Manşûr Najm ad-Dîn Ghâzi b. Qara Arslan (693-712/1294-1312). Connections with the Il-Khanids remained close, and Öljeitü married Najm ad-Dîn Ghâzi's daughter Duniyâ Khâtûn.¹² Mongol protection enabled the Artuqids to recover several towns and fortresses of Diyârbakr formerly held by them but subsequently lost to powers like the Ayyûbids and the Rûm Seljuqs. Ibn Baṭṭûṭa waxes very eloquent about the prosperity of Mârdîn and about the splendour of the court of the then Amîr, al-Malik aṣ-Şâliḥ Shams ad-Dîn Maḥmûd (712-65/1312-64), and the learning and piety of his Vizier, his chief Qâḍî, etc.¹³ One important factor in Mârdîn's commercial life and its cultural efflorescence was the presence of a strong Christian element in the town's population and in Diyârbakr as a whole, where there were numerous bishoprics and monastic foundations; from 1171 to 1207 Mârdîn was the seat of the Jacobite Patriarchate (and again from 1555 onwards), and these Patriarchs in Diyârbakr were usually elected with the Artuqids' approval.¹⁴

It was doubtless this prosperity of the Artuqid principality, the presence of numerous Ṭâ'î Arab elements in the province of Diyârbakr, together with certain ancient links between Ḥilla and Mârdîn, which attracted Şafî d-Dîn thither. In the past, the Mazyadid Amîr Dubais b.

¹⁰ Artuqids, rather than the Ortoqids or Urtuqids of older orientalisks (*artuq* "large amount, excess", see Clauson, *An etymological dictionary of pre-thirteenth century Turkish*, 204-5). For the history of the dynasty, see, *IA*, "Artuk Oğulları" (M.F. Köprülü), *ET*² art. "Artukids" (Cl. Cahen), and Bosworth, *The Islamic dynasties, a chronological and genealogical handbook* (Edinburgh 1967), 119-20.

¹¹ See Minorsky, *ET*¹ art. "Mârdîn".

¹² Ibn Baṭṭûṭa, *II*, 117-18, 144, tr. *II*, 337, 353.

¹³ *Ibid.*, *II*, 144-5, tr. *II*, 353-4.

¹⁴ See Minorsky, *art. cit.*, who also gives various estimates by 18th and 19th century European travellers of the proportion of Christians in the town; this was apparently at that time one quarter or one third of the total population.

Şadaqa (501-29/1108-35) had married Gauhar-Khâtûn, daughter of the Artuqid Amîr II-Ghâzî (497-516/1104-22), and it was to Mârdîn that Dubais had fled for refuge at one point during his warfare with the Abbasid Caliph al-Mustarshid. After the assassination of Dubais, his body was brought to Mârdîn by Gauhar-Khâtûn and buried near the tomb of her father II-Ghâzî.¹⁵

Şafî d-Dîn was warmly welcomed in Mârdîn by Najm ad-Dîn Ghâzî, and later by his son Shams ad-Dîn Maḥmûd. He became a familiar figure in the court circle, combining the congenial rôle of *nadîm* with his own professional activity as a merchant and trader. He further accompanied the Amîrs on their military campaigns; thus he was with Najm ad-Dîn Ghâzî at the conquest of Irbil in 702/1302-3, and celebrated the victory in a poem.¹⁶ Mârdîn became a second home for him, as numerous of his verses show :

But I have in Mârdîn bands of helpers, through whom I acquired strength for my back when I halted at Mârdîn,

Kings, whom I have made my resource of strength in every calamity, whenever fate extends its tentacles.¹⁷

Concerning the encouragement and companionship which he found at the Artuqid court, he writes :

Whenever I am drowning in the foaming billows of cares, in Mârdîn I come face-to-face with a strong rescuer,

A town which I have never yet approached without feeling in my mind that it is my home town, the place where I wish to lay my head,

They have lavished upon me both largesse and an affection which is part of their essential nature, and which makes me feel even more at home.¹⁸

The whole story of his departure from Ḥilla and his finding a congenial haven with the Artuquids is related in a passage of deftly-turned *saj'*, sparkling with untranslatable paronomasia, in the Preface to his *Dîwân* :

¹⁵ See Ibn Khallikân, II, 265, tr. I, 506, quoting from the *Ta'rikh Mayyâfârîqîn* of Ibn al-Azraq.

¹⁶ *Dîwân* (Damascus 1297-1300/1880-3), 78-81, ed. Najaf, 74-6.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, ed. Damascus, 195, ed. Najaf, 182.

¹⁸ *Dîwân*, ed. Damascus, 210, ed. Najaf, 196-7. In the light of Şafî d-Dîn's prolonged contacts with the Artuquids, it seems somewhat unjust of Cahen to say in his *EI*² article on the dynasty that "we do not know of any writer of note who lived in the entourage of the Artuquids".

Then there arose in Iraq various wars and tribulations — and grave affairs and hatreds became protracted — and these necessitated my going far away from my ancestral den — and my forsaking my family and kindred — at a time when I had already completed a collection of poetry — whose fame preceded me to the various capitals — and which travellers related in the course of their journeys — so when the evil deeds of fate at last proved kind to me — and the anger of events came to conciliate me — through my setting down my travelling equipment in the courtyard of monarchs amongst the sons of monarchs — the refuge of the rich man and the penniless desperado alike — the pride amongst monarchs, both of recent times and of the past — the monarchs of the lands of Bakr b. Wā'il — the Artuqids, restorers of the rents of disunity in religion — the resettlers of the broken bone of Islam and the Muslims — may their days never cease being propitious (literally, "showing a mouthful of gleaming incisor teeth") — whilst ever the hastening wind travels onwards — and the questing vital spirit continues to breath — and the leaves of the trees are dispersed to the winds — and the grey-coloured doves become mingled in conflict :

Numerous favours fettered me to their court, the fetters of auspicious hope,
And I set up my mind in charge of eulogising them, [that is], the noble characteristics of al-Manṣūr and aṣ-Ṣāliḥ.¹⁹

Şafī d-Dīn addressed numerous *qasīdas* to Najm ad-Dīn Ghāzī, and after the latter's death in 712/1312, to his son and successor ²⁰ Shams ad-Dīn Maḥmūd, who showed himself even more appreciative than his father. Amongst his poems are a special group which Şafī d-Dīn himself called the *Durar an-nuḥūr fī madā'ih al-Malik al-Manṣūr*, and which are often known as *al-Qasā'id al-Artuqiyyāt*. These comprise 29 odes, one for each letter of the alphabet, and in the poems, the opening letter of each verse was well as the *qāfiya* or rhyme letter is the same. The collection is often appended to manuscripts of Şafī d-Dīn's *Dīwān*, and is likewise given in the four printed editions of the *Dīwān*.²¹

During all these years, Şafī d-Dīn carried on his avocation of trader from the base of Mārdīn. He visited Iraq on various occasions, though not apparently Ḥilla, presumably from fear of his old enemies. He also travelled to Syria, visiting the court at Ḥamā of one of the surviving petty branches of the Ayyūbids, and addressed panegyrics to al-Malik aṣ-Ṣāliḥ Abū l-Fidā' Ismā'il, the celebrated historian (reigned 710-32/1310-31) and to his son and successor al-Malik al-Afḍal Muḥam-

¹⁹ *Dīwān*, Preface, ed. Damascus, 4, ed. Najaf, 6.

²⁰ Actually after the very brief reign in that same year of another brother, 'Imād ad-Dīn 'Alī Alpī.

²¹ Sc. those of Damascus 1297-1300/1880-3, Beirut 1893, Najaf 1375/1956, and Beirut 1382/1962.

mad. More important, in 723/1322 he set out on the Pilgrimage to the Ḥijāz, and afterwards went on to Egypt, where his fame as a poet assured him of a welcome. The Mamlūk official and biographer Ṣalāḥ ad-Dīn Khalīl b. Aibak aṣ-Ṣafadī mentions his arrival in Egypt in both his *A'yān al-ʿaṣr wa-a'wān an-naṣr* and his *al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*,²² and says that he introduced Ṣafī d-Dīn to Sultan an-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalā'ūn. Ṣafī d-Dīn composed many poems for the Mamlūk sovereign, and also for the Chief Secretary 'Alā' ad-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr.²³ He apparently made a second visit to Cairo, and it was on one of these two occasions that the Sultan persuaded him to put in order his classical and literary poetry, *qasīdas*, *qit'as* and *muwashshahas*, thus forming the *Dīwān* as we know it today.²⁴ Little is known of Ṣafī d-Dīn's last years, but Majd ad-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ya'qūb al-Firūzābādī, the celebrated lexicographer and author of the *Qāmūs*, mentions meeting him, when the poet was an old man, at Baghdad in 747/1346-7.²⁵ Shortly afterwards he died there, most probably in 750/1349.²⁶

Amongst Ṣafī d-Dīn's other works should be mentioned the classical poetry which he wrote after his *Dīwān* had been put together in Egypt; *al-Kāfiyya al-bad'iyya fī l-madā'iḥ an-nabawiyya*, a metrical exposition of the tropes and figures of rhetoric or *bad'i*, written in praise of the Prophet and in the same *basīṭ* metre as Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad al-Būṣīrī's famous *Burda* ode;²⁷ and the treatise on popular Arabic poetry, illustrated with numerous examples from his own compositions

²² The *A'yān al-ʿaṣr*, as well as the relevant part of the *Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, is still in manuscript.

²³ 'Alā' ad-Dīn (ca. 680-730/ca. 1281-1329) was Syrian by origin, and achieved high renown for his direction of first the Damascus and then the Cairo chanceries; in addition to those poems addressed to him by Ṣafī d-Dīn, many eulogies were dedicated to him by the celebrated poet Jamāl ad-Dīn Ibn Nubāta, See Ibn Hajar, *ad-Durar al-kāmina*, III, 82-4.

²⁴ See *Dīwān*, Preface, ed. Damascus, 5, ed. Najaf, 7.

²⁵ Cited in the Persian Shī'ī biographer Qāḍī Nūr Allāh Shushtarī, *Majālis al-mu'mīnīn* (Tehran 1299/1881-2), 471.

²⁶ The extraordinary vagueness and lack of firm dating of events all through Ṣafī d-Dīn's life, already noted as remarkable in view of his poetic renown, is well illustrated by the uncertainty over the date of his death. Ibn Taghribirdī in *an-Nujūm az-zāhira* (Cairo 1373- /1953-), X, 238, makes the date 749/1348, but in *al-Manhal aṣ-ṣafī*, he makes it 752/1351; Ṣafadī makes it 751/1350; but most authorities, including the near-contemporary Zain ad-Dīn Ḥabīb, cited in Ibn Hajar, *ad-Durar al-kāmina*, II, 371, make it 750/1349.

²⁷ The *Kāfiyya al-bad'iyya* has been printed as an appendix to the Damascus edition of the *Dīwān*, at pp. 496-501, and the Beirut 1381/1962 one, at pp. 685-702.

and those of others, comprising *zajals*, *mawāliyyās*, *kān wa-kāns* and *qūmās*, and called *Kitāb al-‘Āṭil al-ḥālī* “the Book devoid [of grammatical inflections] but decorated [with poetic skilfulness]”.²⁸

II

Şafī d-Dīn was a master of many poetic genres — of eulogy, naturally, but also of heroic and battle poetry, of religious verse, of wine and hunting poetry, and of erotic poetry or *taghazzul*, in which one finds poems addressed to both women and boys. His poetic vocabulary was on the whole straightforward and simple, and we know that one critic complained that whilst his poetry was indeed great (*‘aẓīm*), he did not use rare words such as Mutanabbī had often favoured. This provoked Şafī d-Dīn to reply in a famous poem in which he demonstrated that he could employ the obscure vocabulary of the desert as well as any antiquarian-minded philologist, but that he scorned such diction as uncouth and outmoded. In this poem, after four opening lines stuffed with rare words, he then goes on to say :

[All these are] expressions from which the ears recoil in revulsion when they are recited, and at which men’s spirits shudder in disgust.

It is unpleasant to mention repellent and outlandish words, and leave aside what is familiar.

How should I say, “This is an old-established sandhill (*kathīb qadīm*)” and then say “an old drinking-bowl (*‘aqanqal qadmūs*)”.²⁹

.....

Do you imagine that if I address the beloved one as “O ‘*Ilq*”³⁰ he will know that he is dear and cherished ?

.....

Leave to al-Aṣma‘ī the crossing of the deserts of black lava stones which make the head swim,

²⁸ As noted above, p. 125, n. 86, this has been edited, together with a valuable introduction, by W. Hoenerbach. Also of note here is Hoenerbach’s inclusion of the biographical entry on Şafī d-Dīn by ‘Alī b. Aḥmad al-Madani (d. 1093/1682), Arabic text, 4-5; this is clearly dependent on that of Ibn Hajar, *op. cit.*

²⁹ For these two rare words, see *TA*, VIII, 30, and *LA*, VIII, 52, respectively; according to the Ṣāḥib b. ‘Abbād, *‘aqanqal* = *q.d.ḥ* (perhaps *qīdḥ* “divinatory arrow” rather than *qadaḥ* “drinking bowl” ?) and also “sword”, as in Ṣaghānī’s *‘Ubāb*.

³⁰ This reference to the word ‘*ilq* (originally “what is precious, cherished”) is rather puzzling, since its use for “beloved, dear one” is quite common, cf. 1.2 of the verses of Ibn Sayyid an-Nās quoted above, Ch. IV, p. 115, where we have the phrase *naik al-‘ulūq*. Perhaps it is cited here as an example of euphemism rather than as a rare word.

And the questioning of Bedouins about the correct forms of words, when the tracks across the desert wastes become difficult for him.

Those rare words have dropped out of use, and people have come to employ the expressions of those of high rank.

These permutations of letters are mere iron, whereas mellifluous combinations of words are the lodestone.³¹

The question of Şafî d-Dîn's ability to use rare words is of relevance to the present study in that his *Qaşîda sâsâniyya* contains a remarkable concatenation of freakish jargon words, far more in proportion to the poem's length than those of Abû Dulaf's poem on the same topic. The introductory heading of the poem says that Şafî d-Dîn was asked to compose the *Qaşîda sâsâniyya* for a friend, who desired a work which would display a profound knowledge of the ways of the vagabonds and thus enable the friend to insinuate himself into their ranks for a certain purpose (this purpose is not in fact mentioned). Şafî d-Dîn accordingly put together his *Qaşîda sâsâniyya*, explaining its genesis in a passage of *şaj'*:

When I unloosed the rein of my journeyings — and the time of my morning departure, after being secluded, came to hand — and I began to wander about the land — and make enquiries about the conditions of people — I did not find amongst all the groups of mankind — despite the diversity of types — any group less tiresome — and having greater precious gifts — and giving security against the consequences of destruction — than the group of the “merchants who live by their tongues” — and the heirs of the monarch Sâsân — for they are copiously-endowed with possessions — and enjoying amplitude of life — and I proved for myself the truth of what is in the reports — about the groups of wandering strangers — and I came to realise that there are none on the face of the earth like the dust-covered vagabonds — hence I was deeply desirous of uncovering their inner truths — and of acquiring knowledge about their most subtle secrets — except, however, that I had not been enrolled as a regular member of their profession — nor had I any share in their domain of power — although I used to derive information in the beggars' circles from their Shaikh Sâsân — about their esoteric knowledge, their activities,

³¹ *Diwân*, ed. Damascus, 443-4, ed. Najaf, 422-3. Lines from this poem are further quoted in the well-known anthology of Bahâ' ad-Dîn Muḥammad b. Ḥusain al-Āmili, *âl-Kashkûl* (Bulâq 1288/1872), 8, introduced as follows: “aṣ-Şafî al-Ĥillî wrote to a certain person of high standing after he had heard that the latter had perused his *Diwân* and commented, ‘One can find no fault in it except for the absence of rare words’ ... [12 verses then follow, two of them not present in the text of the Damascus and Najaf editions of the *Diwân*]”. An interesting further point is that the three manuscripts which contain explanatory glosses to the *Qaşîda sâsâniyya* and which are used here for reconstructing the poetic text, also contain interlinear glosses to the four verses of this poem composed of rare words.

their special practices and their stratagems — information which other people could not collect together by merely hearing reports — nor could they acquire it from listening and the exercise of patient endurance — then one of their leaders, those who were personally close to me and were dear friends — pressed me to put together a *qaṣīda* which would encompass their peculiar jargon and expressions — and which would include the most obscure things and the most familiar things about them — and that I should link together in this poem both the serious and the amusing aspects of this group of Sāsān — and the lightweight and the momentous ones — in such a way that it would be a pathway to be imitated by the verbal disputant — and a lamp by which the aspiring learner might be guided — he also pressed me to set down their private expressions in their own jargon — lest the generality of people learn the inner truths about them — and lest those outside the Sāsāni circle (*al-akhshān*) discover how to follow in their special ways — he further asked me to express my own thoughts on the subject in this poem — and to consider the Banū Sāsān as my confederates — and to watch over their interests, even though I was not close to them in blood relationship — and to acknowledge their rights, since I could not push forward their interests. So I recited the following *qaṣīda*, alluding to them ...³²

The question arises, could Şafī d-Dīn have known of the poems of his predecessors, sc. al-Aḥnaf al-'Ukbarī and Abū Dulaf? Although the works of these two poets were never apparently collected into formal *Dīwāns*, Tha'ālībī's *Yatīmat ad-dahr* continued to enjoy popularity in the later Muslim Middle Ages, and we know that manuscripts were copied in the central lands of the Caliphate, such as Diyārbakr, Syria and Iraq, where Şafī d-Dīn spent most of his professional life, as well as in the Iranian lands. It is also worth noting at this point that we know of a curious poem from Şafī d-Dīn's homeland and written by an obscure, blind Iraqi poet Anūshirwān al-Baghdādī, called Shaiṭān al-'Irāq aḍ-Ḍarīr or simply Shaiṭānī.³³ Its relevance to our study lies in the fact that in this poem he satirises the town of Irbil near Mosul and its Iraqi Arab and Kurdish inhabitants, introducing into his verses examples of their outlandish speech and odd pronunciations. Whether these are dialectical expressions or whether they contain some jargon element is as yet unclear; the whole poem requires a detailed philological examination before judgement can be pronoun-

³² *Dīwān*, ed. Damascus, 444-5, ed. Najaf, 423-4.

³³ I have been unable to find any information about him in the following literary biographers: Tha'ālībī, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Bākhārzī, al-Kātib al-Iṣfahānī, Yāqūt, Ibn Khallikān, Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, Ibn 'Imād. It is possible that he may be mentioned in the as yet unpublished part of Şafādī's *Wāfi*, but for the moment, it is not possible even to state when he lived.

ced here.³⁴ But to revert to Şafî d-Dîn's *Qaṣīda s-sāniyya*; there is no clear internal evidence from the poem which points to an acquaintanceship with the earlier writers of such poems; the continuity of certain items of Sāsānî jargon vocabulary from the 4th/10th to the 8th/14th century, indicated below, at, pp. 173 ff., is of course inconclusive here. It is true that explicit acknowledgement of the heritage of former writers was by no means automatic for Islamic authors; many of these last had no compunction about borrowing shamelessly. However, there is no need to look for firm evidence of borrowings from predecessors. It is inconceivable that Şafî d-Dîn, who journeyed as a trader all over the Fertile Crescent, above all through al-Jazīra, Syria and Egypt, the homelands of Muḥammad b. Dāniyāl and his forebears and of Jaubarî, should not have had first-hand knowledge of the rogues and vagabonds who thronged markets, caravanserais and similar public places.

This leads us to the question of Şafî d-Dîn's originality and poetic inspiration in his poem. Although his *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya* is bulging with the beggars' jargon expressions and with descriptions of familiar Sāsānî tricks, there is undeniably a forced quality, a smell of the lamp, pervading the poem. The directness and freshness of Abū Dulaf's poem is lacking. One can easily imagine Abū Dulaf as a Sāsānî, composing his poem out of the depths of his personal experience. Şafî d-Dîn's poem is certainly a literary *tour-de-force*, and may well have been based on keen observation of rogues and beggars — but observation from the outside, despite his use of the first person and his rôle in the poem as the thoroughly-practiced Sāsānî. Hence the sense of genuine identification with the beggar types whom he describes is lacking.

Şafî d-Dîn's poem comprises 75 verses in the *ṭawīl* metre, producing much longer and more measured verses than the tripping *hazaj* metre employed by Abū Dulaf. On the whole, the metre is regular, with *ziḥāfāt* more sparingly employed than in Abū Dulaf's poem, and it is, indeed, much more weighty in form and metre and also in the greater

³⁴ The text of the poem, comprising twenty verses in the *sarî* metre and with the rhyme *lām-alif*, is given by Yāqūt in his *Mu'jam al-buldān*, ed. Beirut, I, 138-9, art. "Irbil"; Yāqūt says that these lines on Irbil are well-known. Concerning the speech habits of the Irbilis, Dr. D.N. MacKenzie informs me that the local Kurds do have certain peculiarities in the pronunciation of *jīm* and often interchange 'ain and ḥā' in pronunciation.

obscurity of its contents and language.³⁵ It occur in the 11th *bāb* of Şafī d-Dīn's *Divān*, the section devoted to diverting pieces, to satires and to poetry which in its theme oscillates between seriousness and joking (*iḥmād*).³⁶ Unlike the case with Abū Dulaf, Şafī d-Dīn makes no mention of his having produced his own commentary for the *Qaşīda sāsāniyya*, even though this must have been a desideratum from the start. In lieu of a proper commentary, at least three of the extant manuscripts of the *Divān*, sc. the two Cairo Dār al-Kutub ones Adab 1269 and Adab 1399 = Adab Ṭal'at 4437, and the Baghdad Iraqi Museum 2247 one, contain interlinear, word-by-word glosses. These glosses are mostly similar to each other, but are by no means always identical; some glosses contain matter not in the others, and sometimes they are at variance with each other. Could Şafī d-Dīn himself have supplied the glosses e.g. by dictating them to a copyist? Clearly, no-one could have been expected to know these jargon word meanings better than the author. However, a later glossator may have been at work; such a person might be reluctant to show his ignorance and might therefore supply glosses simply *ad sensum*, and there are indeed cases where the glosses do not really fit the text of the poem. Above all, there are the not infrequent places where the glosses of the manuscripts vary perceptibly. None of the manuscripts used here seems to be older than the early 12th/18th century (see Part Two, Ch. VIII).

As we have just noted, Şafī d-Dīn speaks as the narrator in his poem, and he plunges straight into his subject without any introduction and without any acknowledgement, however perfunctory, to the convention of the *nasīb* as opening of a classical *qaşīda*. He speaks as one who has mastered all the jargon and the secret signs and allusions of the beggars, and who has thereby achieved a high place in their ranks. He claims a connection with the eponymous Shaikh Sāsān himself, and states that he is generally recognised as "the second Sāsān" (vv. 2, 4-5). Hence he may well appear in public as the proud king of the beggars, the equal of princes and governors, mounted on a fine horse, with a retinue of slaveboys (*ghilmān*, probably to be equated with the *ghilmān* or *fityān*, apprentice beggars, of Abū

³⁵ On the *ṭawīl* metre, and the *ziḥāfāt* possible with it, see Zamakhsharī, *al-Qisṭās al-mustaḳīm fī 'ilm al-'arūd*, 93-101.

³⁶ Ed. Damascus, 444-8, ed. Najaf, 423-7. This *bāb* is lacking in the Beirut editions, presumably on grounds of acceptability and delicacy; it includes, for instance, poems in praise of hashish, see below, pp. 144-5.

Dulaf, vv. 87, 115 commentary) around him and a personal slaveboy (*bushtadârî*) riding on an ass and looking after his sets of rich clothing and other possessions (cf. the *bushtadâriyyûn* of Abû Dulaf, v. 90).

However, more often than not he is to be seen in the multifarious guises of the predatory rogues and beggars themselves. The various stratagems and shady practices set forth here correspond *grosso modo* with those detailed by Abû Dulaf in his *Qasîda sâsâniyya*, although the general picture is more impressionistic and less precise. Şafî d-Dîn's poem lacks the convincingness of Abû Dulaf's one, with its careful explanations in the author's own commentary, often at considerable length, of most of the jargon terms employed; the interlinear glosses of the manuscripts of Şafî d-Dîn's poem are usually laconic, often only a single word, and avoid elaborate explanations.

As is the case all through the history of the Banû Sâsân, religion as a cloak for mendicancy and roguery is prominent in Şafî d-Dîn's poem. He says that he has begged in the mosques, as one completely destitute (v. 8). He has acted as a popular religious storyteller or *qāṣṣ*, here designated as the *qālî* "speaker" and glossed as *muḥaddith al-qīṣaṣ*, and as the *muḥannin*, glossed in MSS. Cairo Adab 1229 and Baghdad Iraqi Museum 2247 as "he who makes stories and poetry absorbing and attractive [to his audience]" (v. 25).³⁷ Similarly, he has been a preacher or *wā'iz*, fasting conspicuously and leading the faithful in prayer; he has achieved a great reputation for piety and eloquence, being able to assume the accents of non-Arabs like Persians and Kurds and thereby claim to be a visiting preacher, as it were, from remote parts like Sistân in eastern Iran, thus opening people's pursestrings. (vv. 10, 14-16). He is likewise adapt at eliciting money by adopting the humble and servile ways of the Şūfis (v. 13).

It is unclear whether Şafî d-Dîn in v. 11, where he depicts himself as urging people to such reprehensible practices as hashish eating, wine drinking, pederasty and the frequenting of whores, is simply painting as violent a contrast as possible with his rôle in preceding verses as the ascetic preacher and deliverer of moral homilies; or whether he means specifically to attach these injunctions to the practices and precepts of extremist groups of antinomian dervishes or Qalandaris, such as the Jawālîqiyya and Ḥaririyya groups of the Rifā'iyya, mentioned above, p. 114. Certainly, the use of hashish, already

³⁷ Hence to be distinguished from the *muḥannin* of Abû Dulaf, v. 82, who dyes his hands with henna and shaves off his moustache in order to pass as a Şūfî or ascetic.

condemned by writers like Jaubarī as a noxious and illegal practice of Şūfis, was notorious amongst the dervishes; a well-known tale credits them with introducing and propagating the use of hashish within the Persian parts of Islam in the first place.³⁸ Şafī d-Dīn himself appears from several poems in his *Dīwān*, to be found in the same section as the *Qaşida sāsāniyya*, as an advocate of the use of the narcotic. He praises it for the feelings of euphoria which it induces, for "subtle thinking", *lutf al-fikr* (or possibly "the gift of thinking", *latf al-fikr*³⁹) and the "permanent state of bliss", *na'im muqīm*, and he compares it favourably with wine, the causer of unpleasant hangovers and dullness of intellect. His legal justification for the practice is the standard one of its defenders, that unlike wine drinking, hashish eating is not specifically denounced in the *Sharī'a* nor unanimously condemned by *ijmā'*, the consensus of the community:

The text of the Holy Writ has not forbidden it, neither has there been consensus in the law on its censure.

... its usefulness is greater than the sin of using it.⁴⁰

The figure of the Dhimmī who had seen the error of his ways and had abandoned his natal faith for the clear light of Islam was, as we have seen from Abū Dulaf and Jaubarī, one calculated invariably to appeal to the pious and credulous amongst the Muslims. Şafī d-Dīn says that he has posed both as a Christian and a Jew, so that the ulema have fallen over themselves congratulating him and have heaped on him presents of rich clothing (vv. 19-20). A further pose of semi-religious status was that of the volunteer fighter for the faith, the *ghāzī*, who had in this a good pretext for begging (v. 53).

For the greater part of his poem, however, Şafī d-Dīn is the typical vagabond, ranging through the towns and countryside, turning his hand to anything which promises a financial return. He has gone round

³⁸ The particular person stigmatised here as responsible is often named as the Khurasanian Qalandarī Shaikh Ḥaidar, founder of the well-known *ṭariqa*, who is said to have discovered by chance the hallucinogenic properties of hashish. Hence one often finds, amongst the multiplicity of names and euphemisms for hashish, *Ḥaidariyya* and *Qalandariyya*, and expressions like "wine of Ḥaidar"; Şafī d-Dīn, in the heading of one of his hashish poems (see below), calls it *al-mufarriḥ al-Ḥaidarī* "the Ḥaidari [herb] which gladdens". Cf. Rosenthal, *The Herb, hashish versus mediaeval Muslim society*, 25, 49-54, 69-71, 142-3, 148-9, 171.

³⁹ The first of these alternatives is the one chosen by Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, 172.

⁴⁰ *Dīwān*, ed. Damascus, 450-2, ed. Najaf, 429-31, tr. Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, 171-4.

as a peddler of trashy goods and knick-knacks (*bushtakānī khurda*, cf. for the first word Abū Dulaf's *bushtadāriyyūn*, those who hump the beggars' takings round on their backs, Persian *pusht*, and for the second one, the modern Arabic *khurdawāt* "small goods, trinkets"), and as a seller of charms and amulets (*naḥḥādh*, cf. the *munfidh at-tīn* of Abū Dulaf, v. 60, the one who peddles small clay tablets for devotional use) (vv. 27, 46). He has frequented the stokeholds of baths and mingled with the dregs of the population, including pimps and whores, who congregate in those places (v. 66). He has become a brigand (*kabbās*, cf. the verb *kabbasa* in Abu Dulaf, v. 34, to denote the activities of a special type of hold-up man), not hesitating to kill a Turk or Mongol and to wound a Persian or Kurd (vv. 63-4).⁴¹

As a quack doctor, he has gone round with his instruments for rolling back eyelids and has given treatment as an eye specialist (*baṣṣāṣ* = *kahḥāl*), and with his pincers for extracting teeth (as a *mubarkik* = dentist). He has sold antidotes for snakebites, administered purges and sold vermifugal drugs like *qanbīl/qinbīl* and wormwood, often fraudulently palming off on people inferior quality drugs and herbs as substitutes for the real thing; and he has claimed publicly to have gathered the highly-prized mandrake root by the traditional method of tying a dog's tail to the plant in order to pull it up (vv. 27-32, 50).

As an astrologer and magician, he has employed the usual paraphernalia of magic circles and devices for dividing up water into patterns for hydromancy, he has practiced divination by tracing lines in sand, throwing things into fire, etc., and he has travelled round houses telling fortunes and explaining omens (vv. 33-4, 41-3). He has sold images, statuettes and tablets with alleged magical and divinatory significance,

⁴¹ Should one see here the expression of a nationalistic Arab feeling on the part of Şafi d-Din? It is true that he could look round the Arab lands of the Fertile Crescent and see them dominated by an unbroken series of non-Arab powers, Turkish, Kurdish and Mongol, the latter of whom, at least during the early part of Şafi d-Din's lifetime, was non-Muslim. On the other hand, as noted above p. 134, the Shi'i communities of central and southern Iraq enjoyed a favoured position in the eyes of certain of the Il-Khanid rulers. Also, Şafi d-Din was quite happy to spend the greater part of his adult life amongst the Turkmen Artuqids, the Kurdish Ayyūbids and the Turkish Mamlūks; nor do we find in his poetry the bitter railing at non-Arab rulers characteristic of Mutanabbi in his denunciations of the Ikshidid regent Kāfūr and of the Turkish commanders controlling Iraq until the coming of the Būyids. More probably, Şafi d-Din is in these two verses highlighting his temerity as a brigand, in that he dares to tackle and kill members of the ruling military classes and of such a notoriously violent race as the Kurds.

casting some of them from lead and other metals into moulds (*tarsh*, cf. the *ḥāfir at-tarsh* of Abū Dulaf, v. 74), and has written out amulets and charms in scripts and languages unintelligible to the masses like Hebrew (here called *qalaftūriyya*, a metathesis of *falaqtūriyyāt* < *φυλακτήρια* "the writing out of phylacteries") and Syriac (vv. 38-40).

Many of the tricks practiced by Sāsānis are alluded to here, but because of the lack of a proper commentary, we usually only know the bare name and outline of the nature of the trick, or else we are reduced to guessing. Some are straightforward enough. Juggling; the mystification of an audience by the use of invisible inks, in this case, inks made from alum or onion water (cf. the *mushaqqif* of Abū Dulaf, v. 61, who uses sal ammoniac or oak galls for the same purpose); the handling of snakes and scorpions; tricks with performing monkeys, bears and donkeys; the domestication and taming of normally mutually hostile and incompatible animals and reptiles, such as a cat, a rat and a viper (cf. Jaubari's mention of this latter type of animal trainer as a typical component class of the Sāsānī tricksters, *aṣḥāb an-nawāmīs*, see above, p. 110); the feigning of physical disabilities and self-mutilation to render oneself an object of pity, such as pretended madness, deafness, blindness (the trick of the *iṣṭīl* and his wife the *kudda* who begs on his behalf, cf. the linkage of these two persons by Abū Dulaf, v. 141, with the definition of the latter as "the woman who begs from people, having her husband with her, in the mosque"), dumbness (a trick which allow the swindler to claim miraculous restoration of his faculty of speech as a result of encountering the Prophet in a dream), paralysis of the limbs, a mutilated hand, an internal injury (the trick of the *ḥājūr*, cf. Abū Dulaf, v. 35, where the *ḥājūr* is defined as the man who feigns a purulent discharge from an internal wound), and fainting fits (vv. 41-2, 44, 46, 50-2, 57-60, 62) — all these are time-honoured wheezes of tricksters which can in every case be paralleled in the earlier Islamic literature and need no detailed explanation.

But we would like to know the exact nature of "the trick with the boxes" (*miṣhtān al-ḥiqāq*), apparently some trick involving slight-of-hand (making something disappear inside the boxes?) since the rest of the verse says the the exponent of this trick distracts people's gaze by whistling and by keeping up a flow of misleading patter (v. 48). Equally mysterious are the tricks which involve playing with a contrivance called "the birds" (*aṭ-ṭair*, glossed in MS Cairo Adab 1399 = Adab Ṭal'at 4437 as "equipment, *āla*, which the practitioner of leger-

demean, *musha'bidh*, needs"), with a nosebag and with eggs, and the trick worked by planting cucumbers in a garden — all of these attracting in the above-mentioned manuscript merely the unenlightening gloss "various kinds of *sha'badha*" (v. 49).

The last eight verses of the *Qasîda sâsâniyya*, from v. 67 onwards, express a different mood. After the catalogue of his diverse rôles as a Sâsânî, Şafî d-Dîn ends with a passage of railing against fate, the ancient Islamic theme of *dhamm ad-dahr*, reminiscent in many ways of Abû Dulaf's closing lines where he expresses his nostalgia for home and his weariness of incessant journeying. Şafî d-Dîn protests to fate that he has endured the discomforts and indignities of the Sâsânî life, the self-mutilations, the lice-ridden state of his clothing and person. Yet fortune has been unkind, and he has been left in an abject and penniless state :

I live in this world like a mere ox, in a state of neglect, without the smallest of coins ...

And my house is like a desert waste, with no morsel of food in it, nor any cover when the cold strikes me (vv. 68, 73).

To cap his misfortunes, his beloved boy shrinks from him in his wretched and filthy state, heaps reproaches on him and threatens to cut short their liaison (vv. 70-2). Şafî d-Dîn's final despairing conclusion is that if fate is against you, no amount of native wit or eloquence can avail you !

Concerning the poetic style of the *Qasîda sâsâniyya*, little needs to be said. If one could disregard the problems of meaning presented by the large number of jargon words and the absence of a proper commentary, the general structure of the poem and its syntax would present few problems; the construction of the verses is straightforward, with few ellipses and with an absence of the rhetorical devices characteristic of the *badî'* style of writing. It is the vocabulary itself, of course, which presents the main problem. Although loanwords from languages like Persian, Hebrew and Greek are obviously present, the majority of the jargon words look typically Arabic in form. One notes a distinct fondness for forming outlandish quadriliterals, e.g. *qazqala* (v. 17), *hanbadha* (v. 24), *mubarkik* (v. 29), *daqshama* (v. 37), *ghashmala(t)* (v. 69), *zaghmara* (v. 72), etc., which is also characteristic of modern colloquials.⁴² These are a good number of nouns and adjectives of

⁴² Cf. Murad Kamil, "Zur Bildung der vierradikaligen Verben in den lebenden semi-

the pattern *fā'ūl(a)* (a pattern fairly restricted in classical Arabic, where the words concerned are not, in fact, loanwords from other Semitic languages like Aramaic-Syriac ⁴³), e.g. *ṭārūḥ* (v. 8), *qārūb* (vv. 4, 26), *jāmūr* (v. 34), *ṣārūkh*, *dāmū'* (v. 42), *shākūk* (v. 46), *ḥāzūza* (v. 62), *dhābūl* (v. 66), etc.; the occurrence of the *miḥ'al* nominal and adjectival form is noted below, p. 179. Beyond these few, however, it is hard to detect any patterns of word-formation, and one can only conclude despairingly that the formative stages in the evolution of this and other Sāsānī jargons, in effect their prehistory, will never be known to us.

tischen Sprachen", *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida* (Rome 1956), I, 459 ff., who stresses the prevalence of quadrilaterals in the spoken speech where one would more usually find trilaterals in written Arabic.

⁴³ Cf. H. Fleisch, *Traité de philologie arabe. I. Préliminaires, phonétique, morphologie nominale* (Beirut 1961), 369-70, who notes that there was a certain development of this form in the post-Islamic conquests period, in large measure under the influence of Aramaic-Syriac, and that the form is still a living one in colloquial Lebanese Arabic.

CHAPTER SIX

THE JARGON ELEMENT IN THE *QAṢĪDA SĀSĀNIYYAS*, WITH SOME NOTE OF JARGONS AND SECRET LANGUAGES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE MIDDLE EASTERN AND NOR- THERN AFRICAN CULTURAL REGION

I

The jargon content of the *Qaṣīda sāsāniyyas* merits examination in the light of two factors : firstly, the general principles which govern the formation of argots and secret languages ; and secondly, the linguistic situation of the central and eastern Islamic lands of the 4th/10th and the 8th/14th centuries respectively when Abū Dulaf and Ṣafī d-Dīn were living and working.

The first factor, sc. the general principles behind the formation of jargons and argots, is by far the better-known and more-studied of the two ; detailed studies of the languages of the Middle East, and especially, of Arabic, during these two periods, are virtually non-existent. With regard to the first factor, on which we shall concentrate here, we should start by defining our terms, and in particular, by stressing the difference between a jargon or argot and a secret language, even though a secret language is always a jargon, and in certain cases, a jargon may also be a secret language. A definition of the languages of special groups, the conditions in which these modes of expression develop, and the relationship between argots and secret languages, has been enunciated with exemplary concision and clarity by Marcel Cohen, whose own studies in this field have ranged from the linguistic territory of his native France (his first linguistic publication being a study of the jargon of the students of "L'X", the École Polytechnique) to that of Ethiopia (the jargon elements within the Amharic of the hippopotamus hunters of Lake Tana, see below, p. 166). In his study, too modestly entitled "Note sur l'argot",¹ he propounds the view that an argot is a parasitic language, the tongue of a special group within a general linguistic unity. It borrows its phonology,

¹ Originally in *BSL*, XXI (1919), 132-47, reprinted in *Cinquante années de recherches linguistiques, ethnographiques, sociologiques, critiques et pédagogiques* (Paris 1955), 133-9.

morphology and syntax from the general linguistic background, but uses at the side of words with meanings common to all, words proper to the special group. Furthermore, it is partial in its constitution, being only partially the language of its users; partial in time, being normally used only within the group; and partial in its extent, its vocabulary comprising only a part of the words necessary for conversation. The language may be incomprehensible to outsiders, once its vocabulary attains a certain extensiveness or when it systematically alters and deforms words of the standard language; but such an incomprehensible language may not necessarily be specially intended as a secret one by its speakers. If they do so wish to achieve the effect of secrecy, however, they may cultivate this secrecy as a defence mechanism (e.g. in the case of the language of criminal groups, or groups with trade or professional secrets), or as a game or play, basically a physiological function (e.g. the jargons of children, in which words are often deformed and altered, though such jargons rarely remain secret long to an attentive hearer; and possibly the initiation languages of children in primitive societies, employed during rites marking the onset of adulthood). Theoretically, the same group might possess an incomprehensible argot and also a secret language, e.g. a criminal group with a general jargon of its own plus a small group of words for defence against the police authorities and non-initiates; this obviously does not mean that the whole of the criminal argot vocabulary is a secret one. Thus the view that the use of an argot is purely and simply a defence mechanism of the group is too simplistic an explanation, although an argot may at times be such. Cohen sees the key to a definition of argot in social realities, above all, in social segmentation: argots express the distinctiveness of social groups, usually small, clearly-definable groups within greater ones. And since they are meant essentially for usage within the group, they are linguistically economical and may comprise only a few essential words; he cites the jargon of the petty traders and hawkers amongst the Jews of Algiers, "une numération, des noms de monnaie, refus, acquiescement, mise en garde. C'est tout." In sum :

Les langues spéciales sont souvent incompréhensibles aux non-initiés; elles sont rarement secrètes d'une manière voulue.

Un langage special naît ou se maintient dans un groupe à vie commune, plus ou moins fermé, permanent ou temporaire.

Jargons and argots as forms of communication among special groups

have been attested in western Europe since the Middle Ages, with France as the region where they appear earliest and are most amply enshrined in literary mentions. The very word *jargon* appears in 12th century France with the vague sense of "murmuring, chattering", and within a century or so, *gergon* has in Provençal the specialised meaning of "the argot of criminals", whilst *gergo* is found in Italian with the same denotation, although it is not until the 15th century that this restricting process for the meaning of the word *jargon* is completed in France itself. The word *argot*, on the other hand, is a later one, its sense of "incomprehensible language of the criminal classes" only finding its way into dictionaries in France during the course of the 17th century.² It is not therefore surprising that France, with its richness of jargon material from the time of the Coquillards and Villon onwards, and with fragmentary materials from a period much earlier than this,³ has within the last century produced the most penetrating studies, both of its own jargons and of argots as a general linguistic phenomenon. For details of these studies, reference may be made to the extensive literature cited summarily in such standard reference works as M. Cohen, *Pour une sociologie du langage*, Collection Sciences d'aujourd'hui (Paris 1956), ch. iii, "Les compartimentages sociaux et les variétés de langage", references and bibliography, 209-13; *Grand Larousse encyclopédique* (Paris 1960-4), I, 564-5, Bibliographie, XI, and *Encyclopaedia universalis* (Paris 1968-), II, 365-7.⁴ It will suffice for our present purpose briefly to note certain of the formative features, both linguistic and extra-linguistic, which seem to be common to the Western and Central European argots, and to test our Arabic material against these features, so far as is possible.

² The etymology of the word *argot* itself is uncertain. Dauzat, in his *Les argots : caractères, évolution, influence*, 12-13, put forward one from an old Provençal word, meaning originally "garment", but early degraded into "old clothes, rags", then coming to mean "the language of those who wear ragged clothes", i.e. beggars. However, Guiraud in his *L'argot*, 5, declines to suggest an etymology, merely pointing out the original sense of the word as being a collective noun, the class of beggars and rogues. A parallel semantic situation is seen in the Spanish term for rogues' jargon, *germania* < *germanos*, *hermanos*, "band of brothers".

³ Dauzat, *op. cit.*, 32, states that the vocabulary of rogues given by Jean Bodel of Arras in his *Le jeu de St. Nicholas* (late 12th century) must be considered as one of these secret languages.

⁴ A recent study, so far unpublished and therefore not mentioned in the bibliographies given here, is that of André L. Stein, *L'écologie de l'argot ancien*, University of California, Santa Barbara, Ph.D. thesis (1969).

Dauzat noted that the extra-linguistic conditions for the formation of jargons seemed to include the following points. First, argots develop in socially or geographically isolated groups, whose members practise a certain degree of communal living. Thus jargons may well be part of a defence mechanism operating within the group, producing a secret language. Such an analysis might well fit criminal argots, but on the other hand, outsiders often penetrate these vocabularies with ease, and their words eventually enter ordinary language and slang; hence it seems safest to view the evolution of jargons as one manifestation amongst several of social cohesiveness within a special group, rather than of secretiveness. Second, although some jargons may be described as "sedentary" ones, e.g. those of schoolboys or of members of certain static trades and crafts, most of them develop amongst peripatetic or shifting groups: seasonal or ambulatory crafts and trades, such as stonemasons, smiths, bell-casters, musicians, actors; soldiers; and above all, beggars and tricksters. Third, jargons seem specially likely to occur in transitional or border regions, where the influence of outside or foreign cultures is felt. For France, Dauzat cites the frontier between Celtic Brittany and the adjacent Franco-phone region; Savoy, in whose isolated valleys French, Provençal and Italian cultural influences meet; and the Jura region, where France and Switzerland march together, as being classic areas for the development of jargons, whilst the Massif Central, for instance, is poor in such speech formations.⁵ To Dauzat's three points, one should probably add a fourth, that of unsettled social and political conditions, which, as we have seen above, pp. 6 ff., conduce to social disintegration and the emergence of bands of beggars and wandering folk, with the subsequent genesis of their peculiar jargons.

The purely linguistic features of the development of jargons are not unique to jargons, but are common to the formation of all special or secret languages, the differences here being conditioned by the linguistic environment and the particular needs of the group. Hence the jargons of beggars and criminals are not, as was thought by an earlier generation of *argotisans*, purely artificial and conventional secret languages, but are the products of a living, if aberrant, linguistic evolution. The processes involved may be regarded as processes of parasitism and deformation,⁶ but they undoubtedly result in healthy

⁵ *Les argots*, 14-18.

⁶ This was expressed in extreme form by J. Vendryès, *Le langage, introduction linguis-*

and vigorous modes of expression which change and evolve exactly like the products of normal linguistic evolution.⁷ Authorities like Vendryès, Dauzat and Guiraud have all made observations on the linguistic features, phonological, semantic and lexical, of jargons in general, their points of reference being naturally the jargons of Western Europe, where these tongues have been most intensely studied, and Marcel Cohen has made similar observations on the languages of special groups in Africa as well as on argots in general (see above).

We may classify these features broadly as follows. First, phonetic modifications, such as assimilation, dissimilation, metathesis, and other sound substitutions. Second, morphological modifications. Here we find the re-arrangement of morphemes, i.e. an anagrammatic process; the prefixing, infixing or suffixing of additional elements, or combinations of all three; abbreviations of words, either initially or finally; onomatopoeic formations; and so forth. Third, semantic changes. The development and differentiation of vocabulary has often been taken as the outstanding characteristic of jargon. Again, Vendryès put this in an extreme form: "L'argot doit surtout son caractère à la différence des vocabulaires. Il résulte en effet d'une spécialisation de la langue commune ... On peut donc réduire au seul vocabulaire les différences qui caractérisent l'argot".⁸ Probably the most widespread process is that of specialisation of meaning, the restriction of a word's sense. But metaphor and metonymy are favoured means also, as are euphemism, antiphrasis and irony; proper nouns may be used as common ones; and proverbial or quasi-proverbial expressions may be used as common nouns too. Fourth, jargons have always admitted considerable numbers of loanwords. Here, one must understand "loanword" as referring not only to a borrowing from an external foreign language, but from any language marginal to the jargon itself. Thus a jargon might borrow words from the standard or literary language of its own country, or from its urban and rural dialects; in this context, the borrowings are as much external loans as those taken from foreign languages. The mixed character of jargon voca-

tique à l'histoire, Collection L'évolution de l'humanité (Paris 1921), 269: "... l'argot déforme, il ne crée pas. La création est extrêmement rare". In the light of our imperfect knowledge, we dare not make so categorical an assertion as this for Middle Eastern jargons, see below, pp. 155-7.

⁷ See the discussion about this in Guiraud, *L'argot*, 25 ff.

⁸ *Le langage*, 296-7.

bularies may be illustrated by the German *Rotwelsch* of the 16th century, which borrowed Hebrew elements from the Yiddish of local Jewish communities, see above, pp. 8-9; likewise, the Romanian jargon of rogues and criminals, *Smeşereasca*, contains many elements from groups within the national and ethnic boundaries of the country, such as Yiddish and Gypsy, as well as Magyar and Russian. The extreme ease with which jargons admit loanwords reflects in part the fluidity and speed of change within the jargons themselves, and in part the mobility of the participating groups, soldiers,⁹ beggars, strolling players, etc. One point to be remembered is that these loanwords always come by oral transmission, and may eventually surface within the jargon and its later recorded form in a very different guise from their shape in the original language. Hence in this particular respect of loanwords in jargons, as well as in the wider context of all linguistic investigation of jargons, it is well never to neglect phonetic principles and to beware of wild speculation and etymologising. As Dauzat rightly says, "Mystifications et supercheries se présentent d'ailleurs à chaque pas dans l'histoire des argots. Aucune matière n'est, pour le linguiste, plus fertile en embûches, plus riche en témoignages menteurs, en documents truqués par la fantaisie des écrivains ou la mauvaise foi des intéressés, ce qui complique singulièrement l'étude scientifique de ces parlers".¹⁰

But when all these linguistic procedures have been tested and tried on the material under examination, the investigator is often left with an irreducible core of words and terms which defy elucidation, and if the jargon is no longer part of a living tradition and we possess no explanatory glosses upon it, their very meaning may be undiscoverable. Should we, then, ascribe a formative rôle to pure invention, despite such denials as those of Vendryès, cited above? Admittedly. Rachid Bencheneb, in a study of the 20th century jargon of Arabic-speaking underworld groups in Algiers, comprising tricksters, criminals and whores, stated that he could discern no more than some twenty words which seemed to be creations of the argot-speakers themselves,

⁹ Dauzat, *Les argots*, 85-7, and Guiraud, *L'argot*, 30, note that military argots are in effect *lingue franche* for communication with the locals in a foreign milieu, and cite modern French army slang, which has a appreciable number of Arabic words, acquired in North Africa, and now passed into popular language, e.g. *flouss*, *flouse* "money", *chouia*, *chouye* "a little", and *toubib* "medical doctor", and which further possesses some Indo-Chinese words.

¹⁰ Dauzat, *op. cit.*, 9.

words like *qapış* "prison".¹¹ Such judgements may well have some validity for recent and still-living jargons, whose immediate antecedents can often be closely observed and which can be studied as living speech-patterns within an environment of fully-known languages and/or dialects. But such considerations clearly do not apply to our own study of the Sāsānī jargons of the 4th/10th and 8th/14th centuries, from which Abū Dulaf and Şafī d-Dīn respectively derived material for insertion in their poems. The antecedents of many of these jargon words are wholly obscure, which is not surprising when viewed against a background of such facts as our lack of an exhaustive diachronic treatment of literary Arabic, such as was done for virtually all European languages by the comparative philologists of the 19th century, let alone our lack of information on the historical evolution of the dialects.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that there are a substantial number of words in the Sāsānī jargons which do not seem to have any obvious connection with what we know of the standard Middle Arabic, nor with other languages of the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle Eastern region. Yet we cannot state categorically that this residue of words stems from the creative imagination of the Sāsānis themselves, when the words' mysteriousness may simply stem from our ignorance of the precise linguistic situation in the Near East during this mediaeval period. As our knowledge here increases, what now appears puzzling may become perfectly explicable; meanwhile, an attitude of agnosticism on this topic seems to be the only justifiable one, unsatisfactory though this is intellectually.

It is, of course, true that totally unfettered and arbitrary invention is not possible within any language, dialect or jargon. All these modes of expression have their characteristic patterns of phonetic compatibilities and incompatibilities, which can often be expressed in formulae of near-mathematical precision.¹² In a language such as classical Arabic, the Arabic philologists from the time of al-Khalil b. Aḥmad

¹¹ "L'argot des arabes d'Alger", *RA*, LXXXVI (1942), 99-100. This particular example is, however, an unfortunate one; *qapış* looks like a form of Arabic *qafaş* "cage", perhaps via Turkish *kafes* used, as is well-known, for the system of immurement in the Saray of the Sultan's male relatives.

¹² See, for instance, Whorf's exposition of the structural formula of the monosyllabic word in standard Mid-Western American English in his "Linguistics ■ an exact science", in *Language, thought and reality, selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf* (Cambridge, Mass. 1956), 223 ff.

al-Farāhīdī (d. 170/786-7) onwards investigated the compatibility of Arabic sounds and worked out rules concerning them; one of their main aims here was to determine the presence of foreign loanwords within the language, the *mu'arrabāt*.¹³ Yet the characteristic structure of the Hamito-Semitic group of languages, with their clearly-defined morphological patterns and with the cardinal importance attached to the basic root, could be expected to make linguistic invention within the phonetic rules of the languages particularly easy. Outside the sphere of jargon formation, many of the linguistic procedures outlined above, pp. 154-5, have always been significant for the refining and enrichment of the expressiveness of Semitic languages. Hence one feels that the possibility of invention by the agile and fertile minds of the Sāsānīs cannot be dismissed from consideration, even if one suspends final judgement either way. From earliest Islamic times, the Banū Sāsān can never have been an ethnically or linguistically homogeneous group; they included in their ranks Arabs, Persians, Kurds, the Aramaic-speaking Nabaṭīs, and perhaps Indians, in the time of Abū Dulaf, and probably Turks also by the time of Ṣafī d-Dīn. Thus the linguistic resources at their disposal for lexical development were extraordinarily wide, and the possibilities for the evolution of hybrids, neologisms, etc. correspondingly high.

II

The extra-linguistic factors which seem to predispose towards the emergence of jargons in general have been noted above, p. 153. Those corresponding factors which we can see at work in the formation of the Middle Eastern Sāsānī jargons have been elaborated in Ch. I above: the existence of closely-knit groups of beggars, tricksters and mountebanks; their ethnic and linguistic heterogeneousness; their wandering mode of life; and their appearance, or at least, their particular efflorescence, in periods of social and political transition and fluidity. There do not seem to have developed in the mediaeval Middle East the picturesque and varied special terms for "jargon, argot, cant" which developed in Western Europe, e.g. the French *Jobelin* and *Blèche* of criminals, and the *Mormé*, *Terratchu* and *Bellaud*

¹³ See L. Kopf, "The treatment of foreign words in mediaeval Arabic lexicography", *Studies in Islamic history and civilization*, ed. U. Heyd, Scripta Hierosolymitana IX (Jerusalem 1961), 191-205.

of seasonal, migratory workers; at least, these have not come down to us. The most usual general term in contemporary sources is simply *al-lughā*, sometimes more closely defined as *lughat Shaikh Sāsān*, *lughat al-mukaddīn*, *lughat al-ghurabā'*, etc. Special descriptive terms seem to have appeared in the Middle East in comparatively recent times only, e.g. the *Abdilti* and *Zargari* of Central Asia and eastern Iran, see below, pp. 171 ff. From the early mediaeval period we have the term *munākāt Banī Sāsān* employed by Tha'ālībī in his biographical introduction to Abū Dulaf's *Qaṣīda sāṣāniyya*,¹⁴ and the related form *munāghāt* of Abū Ḥayyān at-Tauḥīdī, again in reference to the Ṣāḥib Ibn 'Abbād's circle and the minister's fascinated interest in these jargons.¹⁵ It is this last form which must, in fact, be the correct one. The root *n.k.y* conveys the idea of hurting, wounding an enemy, see *LA*, XX, 215, and is obviously not the one required. The root *n.gh.y* or *n.gh.w*, on the other hand, provides the clue to our own word *munāghāt* = "jargon". According to *ibid.*, XX, 209, one of the meanings of the basic form of the verb is the idea of making a pleasant sound in speech or singing, so that *naghya* or *naghwa* = *naghma* "melodious singing", but its other meanings put us more closely on the trail of our term, for the basic form also conveys the idea of hearing something which you do not understand, or which is not yet clear to you at the time of hearing. It is this range of meanings which is closest to the sense of "jargon", "secret language", rather than the third derived form of the verb given here, *nāghā* = *ghāzala* "to speak to someone in an amorous or flirtatious manner" or "to speak to a child in a manner which will soothe and please it". This derived form appears in some modern colloquials, e.g. in Syria, meaning "to warble (of a bird)" and "to whimper, whine (of a child)".¹⁶ Nevertheless, the term *munāghāt* = "jargon" does not seem to have been widely used in mediaeval Islamic times, and this sense of the word has not apparently left its mark in modern forms of Arabic.

The many unresolved linguistic mysteries of both the *Qaṣīda sāṣāniyyas* of Abū Dulaf and Ṣafī d-Dīn make it difficult to achieve anything

¹⁴ *Yatīmat ad-dahr*, III, 357.

¹⁵ *Akhlāq al-wazīrain*, 185.

¹⁶ A. Barthélemy, *Dictionnaire arabe-français, dialectes de Syrie : Alep, Damas, Liban, Jérusalem* (Paris 1935-54), 838; cf. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, II, 694, and C. de Landberg, *Glossaire daïnois* (Leiden 1920-42), III, 2796. Landberg has here a long discussion on his hypothesis of the essential common origin of the biliteral root *n.gh* and its developments *n.gh.m*, *n.gh.w/y*, etc., and the word *lughā*.

like a neat and comprehensive tabulation of the origins and significations of the jargon terms in them. Nevertheless, some attempt at classification should be made, beginning with the phenomena of Abū Dulaf's poem.

Phonetic modifications of what are originally non-jargon words are not easy to spot. We may, however, have metathesis in the verb *qanwana*, describing the trick of the *muqanwin*, who claims to be one of the People of the Book converted to Islam (v. 59), if this form stems from the Christian ecclesiastical Arabic verb *qanwana* "to punish, require penance according to the Church's *qānūn* or rule". Similarly, doubling or lengthening of the middle radical has taken place in *fash-shasha* "to fart in the mosque, thus annoying the worshippers into giving money to make the beggar go away" (v. 53), producing a Form II verb from *fashsha* "to belch, fart softly and gently". Morphological change seems to be observable in the verb *bashraka* "to dress up in the garb of an ascetic or holy man" (v. 42), if this is a variant of the root *b.sh.r.*, with the idea of putting something close to one's body or skin. The suffixed fourth radical *-k* is common to several jargon verbs in vv. 40 and 42, and may be a meaningless component added merely to enhance the assonantal quality of the verses.

Semantic change is the clearest mode here for the formation of Abū Dulaf's jargon, and a wide range of examples could be given. Specialisation and the restriction of meaning is frequent. Thus *dharra'a* "to beg for scraps of food from the preparer of *harīsa*" (v. 33) is a narrowing-down of the classical meaning of this form, "to stretch forth the arms, gesticulate with the arms"; *kabbasa* "to extort money from someone who has just cashed a financial draft" (v. 34) is from classical *kabasa* "to seize by force, swoop down upon"; *shattaba* "to mutilate oneself, alleging that bandits have attacked one" (v. 36) is from the wider sense of the verb "to scarify, make an incision for letting blood"; *fakkaka* "to escape from bonds or chains as a feat of skill" (v. 40) is from the general sense of the verb "to separate two things fastened together": *khushnī* "non-beggar, person outside the beggars' circle" (vv. 69, 169) is from classical *khashin*, *akhshan*, pl. *khush(u)n* "rough, coarse"; and *kudda* "woman who goes round the mosque with her husband, begging" (v. 141) may possibly be connected with the verb *kadda* "to labour, exert oneself" and a nominal form like *kadd* "exertion".

Transfer of meaning appears in *matr* "coitus" (v. 15), from *matara* "to stretch a rope out taut", presumably with the rigidity of the erect

penis in mind; *Abū Shukr* "father of gratitude" is an allusive formation, on a familiar Arabic pattern, for "salt" (v. 73); and in *'allāfa* "woman who is the breadwinner through her begging activities" (v. 126) we have a transferred sense from *'allāf* "fodder-merchant". Metaphor is employed in *labūsa* "vulva, pudendum muliebre" (v. 25), originally something like "what covers, hides the nakedness of the body", in this case, pubic hair; and in the words *bāz* "hawk" and *ṣaqr* "falcon", applied to the skilful beggar woman (v. 126), we have expressions of admiration for her keenness and ingenuity. In the phrase *ghāliyat al-juhr* "precious unguent of the anus" (v. 139) we have a euphemism for "faeces". As examples of possible irony, we may note *qaṣr* "kiln, stokehold of a bath" (vv. 56, 123, 136), original sense "building, palace", but see the notes to v. 56 in Part Two, Ch. VII; *iṣṭabl* "mosque" (v. 140), original meaning "stable"; and probably *shaghātha* "mosque" (vv. 52, 145), if this is to be connected with *sha'itha* "to be disordered, ruinous". As examples of proper nouns being used as common ones, we have in v. 70 *Abū Mūsā* for the *khushnī* or non-beggar (origin obscure), and in v. 159 *Mālik* for the *waqqād* or stoker of the bath (from the angel Mālik, who is guardian of Hellfire and the superintendent of the tortures of the damned, as in Qur'ān, xliii. 77).

Some loanwords are obvious in Abū Dulaf's poem, although there may be a conjectural element about their ultimate origins, e.g. *kāgh/kāgha* "pretended lunatic", glossed as *al-mutajānin wa-l-mutajānina* (v. 30), probably from Persian *kāgha* "mad"; *qainūn* "the place where the beggars come together and share out the proceeds of their begging" (v. 38), probably from Greek *κοινωμία* "community"; *shaulasa* "to go round begging in ascetic guise" (v. 43), possibly from Greek *σαλός*, literally "idiot, fool", a by-name borne by many saints and holy men of the Eastern Christian Church; *qannā* "the one who recites the Jewish and Christian scriptures and pretends to be a convert to Islam from these faiths" (v. 49), probably from Hebrew *qannā* "zealot"; *hādhūr* "the circle of the fortune tellers and tricksters" (v. 57), from Eastern Aramaic $\sqrt{h.d.r}$ "come back, go round, encircle" > *hādūr* "circle"; *bushṭadāriyyūn* "porters hired by the beggars to transport the fruits of their collecting" (v. 90), from Persian *pusht-dārī* "one who carries something on his back"; *khushbūyī* "drugged stew" (v. 116), thus restored in the text by the present writer on the basis of Persian *khūsh-būī* "aromatic, having a savoury smell"; and *kurs* "hunger" (v. 116), from Persian *gurs*.

It is very likely that loans from other languages lie behind some of

the considerable residuum of words whose meanings and/or etymologies are unclear. This list includes a fair proportion which look like genuine Arabic words and formations, e.g. *maisara*, *makhṭara* (v. 37), *dahthama* (v. 79), *mishqāʿ* and *shiqāʿ* (vv. 114, 147, 149), *qanādir* (v. 172); some which might conceivably be Arabic, e.g. *baflaka/balfaka* (v. 40), *zankala* (v. 51), *burkūsh*, *barkak* (v. 75), and *shaudhar* (vv. 115, 118); and some which are clearly not Arabic, e.g. *samqūn* (v. 86), *b.r.z.k* (v. 99), *barbāzār* (v. 156), *khalanjīyyūn* (v. 165), or at least not wholly Arabic, as may be the case in a compound like *z.m.kdān* (v. 46).

Something has already been said about the language of of Ṣafī d-Dīn's *Qasīda sāsāniyya* and the problems presented by its vocabulary (see above, pp. 148-9). Elucidation of the jargon element here presents perceptibly tougher problems than does this process for Abū Dulaf's poem. Abū Dulaf was not striving for the effect of reconditeness and erudition about the beggars's ways to the degree which his later successor undoubtedly was. Abū Dulaf managed to introduce his jargon terms smoothly and naturally into the flow of his poem, whereas one feels that Ṣafī d-Dīn is all the time stuffing as many freakish words into his verses as is possible and as is consonant with the classical Arabic skeleton of the poem. And of course, we lack the often lengthy explanations of the jargon terms and the practices of the beggars supplied for us by Abū Dulaf in his commentary, the interlinear glosses in our three manuscripts of Ṣafī d-Dīn's poem being usually laconic and concise.

In dealing with Ṣafī d-Dīn's jargon terms, we may note in the realm of phonetic change the plural noun *q.tyān* "beggar chiefs" as a possible reading in v. 13, one which looks (if the reading is indeed correct, but see the notes to this verse, in Part Two, Ch. VIII) as if it should be linked with the classical collective noun *qaṭīn* "group"; possibly we have here a plural on the *fu'lān* or *fi'lān* measure, yielding *qutnān/qiṭnān* with dissimilation of *n > y*. In the *nāṭūr* of v. 36 (if we read thus rather than *nāṣūr*) "the swindler's accomplice in the audience", literally, "one who keeps watch", we appear to have preserved the *ṭ* of the Aramaic original. If the admittedly dubious gloss "their tongues" is adopted for *al-hāt* in v. 62, we may conceivably have a haplogy of classical *al-lahāt* "uvula". Of morphological changes, we may note *Ṣūfān* for "Ṣūfī shaikhs" (v. 13), with the Arabic plural suffix *-ān* (influenced by Persian?), and also the noun suffix *-i* in *qālī* "storyteller" (v. 25) < verb *qāla* "to say". The verb *tallagha* "to speak" and the verbal noun *tillāgh* "speech" (vv. 15, 26, 36) look like secondary formations from

✓ *laghā* "to talk, babble frivolously, cf. also the noun *lughā*, or else it may stand for *talaghghā*. A denominative verb *mayyama* is at the convergence of formations from the letter *mīm* used as an abbreviation for two entirely different things; in v. 19 *al-mīm* is the Prophet Muḥammad, cf. also v. 58, so that *mayyama* = "to become a convert to the faith of Muḥammad", whereas in v. 23, *tamyīm*, *maṣḍar* of *mayyama*, means "claiming to be able to discover buried treasure", where *al-mīm* = *al-muṭālib* "treasure-seeker".

Semantic change looms large in the jargon words of Ṣafī d-Dīn's poem. We find specialisation and the restriction of meaning in *khruṣhnī* again, familiar from Abū Dulaf (see above), with its plural form given here as *akhshān* (vv. 1, 12, 32). *Nas(a)b/nash(a)b* "house", pl. *ansāb/anshāb* (vv. 8, 14, 38, 43, 73) is used here to denote "house" in general; the "house of God", i.e. the mosque; and "the house of God *par excellence*", i.e. the Ka'ba. If the spelling with *shīn* is correct, it would seem to be a specialisation of classical *nashab(a)* "property, including land, herds, etc." *Kassāb* in the sense of "astrologer" (v. 33) is a narrowing-down of the general meaning "a person who earns his living, gains money". Abū Dulaf's *k.dda* "woman who goes round begging with her husband", vocalised as *kudda* in the oldest of the manuscripts of Ṣafī d-Dīn's poem used here, appears in Ṣafī d-Dīn's poem, v. 57, as "the beggar's wife", but in v. 45 with the general sense of "woman", pl. *kidād*, in this case a widening of the earlier, restricted meaning.

Transfer of meaning is seen in *shahḥama* "conciliate, gain someone's favour" (v. 2), originally "to fatten up, give someone fat to eat", classical verb forms I and IV. *Ṣahl* "horse, mount" (v. 6) stems from the classical verb *ṣahala* "to neigh, whinny". *Muzaffat* "destitute, penniless" (vv. 8, 70) means properly "smeared with pitch or pine resin" sc. *zift*, hence perhaps "dirty, defiled" > "destitute", but see further p. 148 above. *Bākhis*, the numeral adjective "one", sc. *wāḥid* (v. 16), seems to come from the root *bakhasa* "to diminish, deprive". *Dhābūl* "whore" (v. 66) is probably to be connected with classical *tadhabbalat* "to walk with a mincing, affected gait (woman)", or with the somewhat later formation from this root *dhābil*, *dhablān* "having languid eyes", > "coquettish" > "whore". *Qashm/qishm* "beloved boy, ephebe" (v. 70) is probably a transferred meaning from the classical forms *qashm*, *qishm*, denoting dates which are edible but not quite ripe, and meat which has been cooked but is still somewhat "rare", respectively; the application here of *qashm/qishm* to a boy indicates the bloom of youth just before maturity.

We find metonymy and allusion in *shamūl* "bread" (vv. 21, 57, cf. the *mashāmūl* of Abū Dulaf, v. 154), literally, "what is all-embracing, the staff of life"; and in *qarūḍa* "rat" (v. 52), literally "the gnawing one". *Zīh* for hashish (v. 11), familiar in other mediaeval texts of hashish addiction, must be a nickname or possibly a euphemism; the lexica of classical Arabic provide no clue here. The use of *l.qy* (*laqy*, *luqy* or *liqy*) "act of meeting someone" for "copulation" (vv. 11 and probably 70) is certainly euphemistic, as is *ta'dīl*, with the same jargon meaning (v. 11), literally, "act of making straight, level, even", presumably referring to the normal position for coitus, cf. modern English slang "to lay [a woman]", or else meaning "act of pairing up", from the sense "to balance, place two things in equipoise"; and in *malāqim* "mouths" (v. 45), sing. *malqam*, we appear to have a mild euphemism from the basic meaning "place where one takes in mouthfuls". *N.y.f* "hunger" (v. 22) is hard to explain if not by antiphrasis from classical *nayyif*, *naif* "excess".

There are several wholly or partly obscure words, like *marqān* "dīnār" (v. 3); *qārūb* "beggar chief" (vv. 4, 26); *kazākī* "governors, rulers", sing. *k.zkī* (vv. 6, 65, cf. the verb *kazkā* in v. 10); *bazwān(ī)*, pl. *bazāwīn* "Persians and/or Kurds" (vv. 15, 63); *karājīm* "the Jinn" (v. 33); *k.fīr*, pl. *kafāīr* "Mongol or Turk" (vv. 63, 65); *ḥamdānī* "pimp" (v. 66: perhaps from a proverbially famous pimp?) and *dabashrī* "ox" (v. 68). Several of these look like non-Arabic words, and Ṣafī d-Dīn's poem is certainly rich in jargon loanwords. These include the two terms for coins in vv. 3, 16, 26, 68, *mard* "dirham", perhaps from Persian *mard* "man" referring to the effigies on Byzantine or Armenian coins, and *tank* (if we read thus) "*fals*, copper coin", from Armenian *tank*, Persian *dāng* "quarter of a dirham"; *hankama* "to gather round, collect together", noun *hankām* "assembly, circle" (vv. 5, 56), from Persian *hangām(a)* "assembly, group, especially of strolling players, musicians, etc."; *bushtadār(ī)* "slaveboy" (v. 7), from the Persian expression noted already in Abū Dulaf's *bushtadāriyyūn*, probably with additional echoes from *pusht* "back" > "backside" > "catamite"; *shann* "the numeral two" is reminiscent of Hebrew *šēnayīm*, and *dast* "ten" in the same v. 16 is probably from the common Indo-European root for "ten" *dekṃ*; *q.nta* "town" and *q.ntānī* "town dweller" (vv. 17, 65) are reminiscent of Middle Persian *kant*, *kanth* "town"; *qannā* in v. 19 is glossed as "Christian", and is obviously the same as Abū Dulaf's *qannā*, see above p. 89; *k.b.sht.r* "camel" (v. 24) includes as one of its elements Persian *ushtur* "camel"; *rakhtānī* "the itinerant

drug-peddler who opens and spreads out his wares" (v. 27) is doubtless from Persian *rakht* "goods, equipment, clothing, etc."; *manj* "a piece of equipment used by astrologers for divination purposes" (v. 34) is ultimately from Greek μάγανον "machine, mechanical contrivance", which has widespread forms in most Near Eastern languages; *qalaf-tūriyya*, glossed as a talismanic formula (v. 39) is, of course, a metathesis of *falaqtūriyya* or some similar form from φυλακτήρια "the writing of phylacteries"; *mufawwil* "one who draws omens" (v. 42) reflects a Middle Arabic or dialectical form of classical *mufa'il*; *barghāshāt* "ears" (v. 44) may well incorporate a form of Persian *gūsh* "ear" or *bar gūsh āmadan/rasīdan* "to hear"; in *bushtakānī khurda* "peddler of trashy, defective goods" (v. 46) we have two Persian words, the first a form parallel to *bushtadārī*, the second *khurda* "small, insignificant [object]"; *jarrakha* "to dance" (v. 54) probably comes Persian *charkh* "wheel, circle of dancers, etc."; and *khandaja* "to laugh" must be from Persian *khandagī* "laughter". The text's *kavārīb* "baths, *ḥammāms*" (v. 66) appears to stem from some non-Arabic word, given here a broken plural. Possible emendations are *karānīb*, sing. *karnīb*, from Greek χέρνιψ "appurtenances, equipment of the bath", or *karāmīb*, sing. *karmāb*, from Persian *garmāba* "bath", but these are pure conjectures, unsupported in the manuscripts. The term *gammīn* "furnace, stokehold of the bath" in the same verse (and also in Abū Dulaf, v. 153) is certainly from Greek κάμινος with the same meaning; this last, however, is not a jargon term but a word which passed into standard, mediaeval Arabic. The prominence in Ṣafī d-Dīn's poem of Persian loanwords, already noticeable in Abū Dulaf's poem (which was of course almost certainly written on Iranian soil), is striking; the culture of Il-Khanid Iraq and the Turkmen principalities of eastern Anatolia, the regions in which Ṣafī d-Dīn lived and worked for much of his life, was a strongly Persianised one.

Finally, we may note a few examples of what seem to be post-classical usages in Ṣafī d-Dīn's poem, though, owing to our lack of historical studies and dictionaries of Middle Arabic, it is not easy to determine whether these usages were in the standard language of the time, or whether they are jargon words. Includes here are *fais* "lie, lying" (v. 3), probably to be connected with classical *fāsha* "to boast unjustifiably", whose *maṣdar* is *faish*; *qajm*, *qujmān* "flattering speech", verb *qājama* "to address, speak with someone" (vv. 3, 18, 44, 45, 47), unknown to classical Arabic; *qayyafa* "to beg importunately" (vv. 8, 57), from a post-classical usage meaning "to walk after someone,

follow someone closely"; and *ladhdhadha*—"to give something sweet to someone" (v. 22), again not found in classical Arabic in this sense.

III

For the rest of this chapter, it may be instructive to glance rapidly at certain known jargons and secret languages of the Middle Eastern and North African region (taken in a large sense, to include the Islamic world from the Maghrib to Central Asia and its fringe region, the Horn of Africa), in one or two cases relating elements of these to the mediaeval Arabic *Sāsānī* jargons which are our main concern. Naturally, no claim to representativeness, let alone to exhaustiveness, is hereby made.

The jargons of Turkey have attracted a comparatively large amount of attention, from the time of Ahmed Fikri's *Lughat-ī gharībe* (Istanbul 1307/1889-90) onwards. Notable are the studies of Gordlevsky, Mikhaïlov and Steinherr on the argots of the Istanbul lower classes during the early years of the Republic.¹⁷ Mikhaïlov collected his words in the vicinity of Istanbul, on both the European and Asiatic shores, in the course of 1926, and he added to these some specimens from Ahmed Fikri's work. However, he expressly excluded from his glossary some words which were, in his opinion, too obscene for publication. Steinherr was less prudish. He added to Mikhaïlov's collection from his own experience of popular words and expressions used by all levels of society; but some of these were in fact only used by certain groups of the lower classes and underworld, such as *ḥammāls* or porters, seamen on the Golden Horn and Bosphorus ferries, cab drivers, apaches and mobsters (*külhanbeyiler*¹⁸), etc. The argot of these last was especially studied by Gordlevsky. Amongst the actual words and phrases cited, an excessive proportion relate to such topics as masturbation and unnatural vice.¹⁹

¹⁷ V.A. Gordlevsky, "Kulhan-Bey v Konstantinopole i ego argo", *Doklady Akademii Nauk SSSR* (1927), No. 1, 19-24; M. Mikhaïlov, "Matériaux sur l'argot et les locutions populaires turc-ottomanes", *Morgenländische Texte und Forschungen*, II/3 (Leipzig 1930), 1-40; F. Steinherr, "Zur Stambuler Volks- und Gaunersprache", *Islamica*, V (1931-2), 178-97. A modern glossary of Turkish argot words may be found in Ferit Develioğlu, *Türk argosu*, 3rd enlarged edition (Ankara 1955).

¹⁸ One notes here the continued association throughout Islamic history of the haunters of the stokeholds (*külhan* "stokehold") of baths and kilns with begging and roguery, see above, pp. 121-2.

¹⁹ This should not surprise us, for the prominence of obscene and scatological elements

From a region on the margins of the Islamic world, where Christianity, Islam and paganism intermingle, sc. Ethiopia, Wolf Leslau has published a series of articles on local argots.²⁰ Three of these deal with those of non-Muslim, Amharic-speaking communities, the merchants of Moṭa in Godjam, the minstrels of Dābrā Markos in Godjam, and the Falashas of Gondar possessed of the spirit called *zār*.²¹ A fourth study deals with the language of the secret society of *m^wayät* amongst the pagan Gurage of the Gogot region. Leslau further notes that Marcel Cohen has published material from an argot of the Woyṭo hippopotamus hunters of the shores of Lake Tana, and Enrico Cerulli material from a low-caste Somali group.²² Leslau's argots are true jargons, used amongst certain professions or members of secret societies by initiates or members of those groups; in the case of the *m^wayät* jargon, and probably that of those possessed by *zār* spirits, they are probably not meant to be understood by outsiders and therefore partake of the nature of secret languages. They are therefore distinct from the artificial languages employed by such groups as children, shepherds, etc., which transform the standard language by means of circumscribed methods, such as addition of one or more extra syllables to the root or inversion of the letters of the root. What is of interest to us here is not the particular nature of each of these argots, the precise details of which concern only *éthiopisants*, but the general linguistic principles

is a feature of almost all underworld and criminal jargons. This may in part reflect brutish living conditions, but is more probably the result of a process of catharsis, an expression of freedom from the restraints and taboos of normal civilised life. See Guiraud, *L'argot*, 45-6, who quotes the fact that a recent dictionary of modern French argot contains only four words for "arm" versus forty for "anus".

²⁰ These five articles, published originally in scattered periodicals, have been conveniently collected together in his *Ethiopian argots* (The Hague 1964).

²¹ Belief in the existence of the *zār* is also widespread in Muslim regions like Somalia, the Sudan, the Hijāz, Yemen and Oman. Whether *zār* beliefs passed from Ethiopia to the Muslim lands (as asserted by Leslau, *Ethiopian argots*, 32, n. 7) is uncertain; a reverse movement would not be impossible. The name *zār* itself is non-Semitic, and according to Leslau, *op. cit.*, 31, may be derived from the name of the supreme god of the pagan Cushites. The literature on the phenomenon is very extensive, both for Ethiopia and the Arab lands; see the citations in P. Kahle, "Zār-Beschworungen in Egypten", *Der Islam*, III (1912), 1-41, 189-90, E. Cerulli, *EI*¹ art. "Zār", and S. Streleyn, "Catalogue of Ethiopian manuscripts of the Wellcome Institute of the History of Medicine in London", *BSOAS*, XXXV (1972), 53.

²² *Ethiopian argots*, 8,

behind these argots, expounded by Leslau in his preliminary study "Linguistic principles of the Ethiopian argots".²³

These principles include procedures where changes in the root are involved, such as augmentation or lengthening of the root, repetition of one radical or infixing of a consonant (e.g. of the liquids *r* and *n* in the minstrels' jargon); addition of various suffixes, some of known semantic value like the feminine suffix *-it* of Amharic, others quite arbitrary and devoid of significance in themselves; shortening of roots by omission of a consonant; palatalisation of consonants in the Gurage *mwayät* jargon, it being already a morphophonemic feature in Southern Ethiopian languages; substitution of one sound for another, usually by one of similar articulation point, e.g. a labial for a labial, a liquid for a liquid; and metathesis. One also finds transformation of the vocabulary without change in the word's form, and the use of paraphrase and or euphemism (e.g. "he who eats goats" for "jackal" in the Gurage *mwayät* jargon), or adoption of pejorative near-equivalents (e.g. in the *zār* argot, the use of the word for "mare" for the meaning "girl, woman") and so forth. Loanwords are frequent in most argots, as one discerns clearly from the *Qaṣīda sāsāniyyas* of both Abū Dulaf and Ṣafī d-Dīn; the mobility over wide expanses of territory of such groups as beggars, brigands and other rogues is doubtless a factor predisposing towards the entry of loanwords into these jargons. Within the Ethiopian argots, the merchants' argot borrows words from Arabic and Harari, since speakers of these two tongues are often merchants, and as is to be expected, the *zār* jargon of the magically-possessed has Arabic words; in any case, professional groups like merchants and minstrels are usually travellers and wanderers.

The linguistic procedures of these Ethiopian argots can easily be paralleled in other parts of the Hamito-Semitic linguistic world, such as the Arabic one. Some of the simpler procedures of phonetic and morphological modification are visible in an artificial language on the other side of the Gulf of Aden from Ethiopia, in the former Aden Protectorate (now the People's Republic of South Yemen), given a preliminary description by R.B. Serjeant.²⁴ This language, technically called the *kalām al-mughallaṭāt* "speech containing [deliberate] errors", employs such means as the insertion of a consonant, usually *s* or *j*, after each syllable, so that *hādhā* becomes *hāsādhāsā*; the formation

²³ *Ibid.*, 8-13, originally in *JSS*, IX (1964), 58-66.

²⁴ "'Cant' in contemporary South-Arabic dialect", *TPS* (1948), 121-6.

of all three-radical words on the pattern *faiṭiyā'il*; the infixing or suffixing of certain syllables; and metathesis, so that *qūlī* "say!" becomes *lūgī*. Since Serjeant was unable to ascertain which groups or classes used this language, one is not able to decide whether it falls within the definition of an argot proper, i.e. one used by a definable group or profession.

The Algerian scholar Rachid Bencheneb has described the Arabic jargon of the Algiers underworld as it existed some thirty odd years ago; here we have a true jargon, one which is virtually a secret language. He has given a detailed analysis of its content and of the various ways — phonetic, morphological and semantic — by which its vocabulary has been formed. One notes most of the procedures familiar from other jargons, such as anagrams, e.g. *ṭrīm* for *mrēt* "ill", classical *marīḍ*; abbreviations, e.g. *khanz* from *khanzār* "bad", classical *khinzār* "pig"; and the prefixing or suffixing of extra elements, e.g. *ḥanṭwēl* for *ṭwēl* "tall", classical *ṭawīl*. In women's language, used for concealment against children, menfolk or strangers, one procedure is to prefix an *m*- and infix an *-ng-* after the second radical of the word, e.g. *meshrangeb* from *shrab* "to drink", classical *sharība*. The nominal suffix *-ān* is much used, e.g. *kherjān* "going out", from *khārej*, as is the suffix *-jī* from Turkish and denoting trade or profession, e.g. *qaḥbānjī* "whore". Semantic change includes restriction and specialisation of meaning, so that we have *sal'a* "kif, hashish" < classical *sil'a* "article of merchandise"; quasi-proverbial phrases are used as common nouns, e.g. *kharya fī ḥṣīra* "turd on a mat" = "stupid, worthless person"; proper names are used as common nouns, e.g. *Yḥūdī* "Jew" = "timorous, fearful"; and as one would expect in a cosmopolitan port like Algiers, there is a wide range of loanwords, from classical Arabic, the local Algiers urban dialect, rural Arabic patois, Berber, Turkish, Algerian Judaeo-Arabic,²⁵ French, Spanish, Italian, etc.²⁶

²⁵ Marcel Cohen studied these particular jargon elements, *inter alia*, in his *Le parler arabe des juifs d'Alger* (Paris 1912).

²⁶ "L'argot des arabes d'Alger", *RA*, LXXXVI (1962), 72-101, see also Saadeddine Ben Cheneb, "L'argot à l'époque classique", *Bulletin des Etudes Arabes*, I/4 (1941), 110. The latter writer also notes, *op. cit.* 109-10, the appearance in a line of verse by Ibn ar-Rūmī (221-83/836-96) of two jargon words *zarabanb* and *ṭalanbanb* which exhibit ■ simple modification, sc. the suffixing of the syllable *-anb*, thus disguising the original from of the word. These original words are, in fact, *zarnab*, in the first place "perfume, aromatic bush or plant" > "vulva", by antiphrasis (see *TA*, I, 287), and *ṭanbal*, Persian "small drum" (see Vullers, *Lexicon persico-latinum*, II, 548, who is however unable to

One important aspect of the work done on jargons and secret languages in the Middle Eastern culture region has been that concerned with the languages of various gypsy groups. This is a reflection of the close interest which Indo-European philologists and ethnologists have taken in the gypsies of the Middle East and Europe and in the Romany language ever since the appearance in the 19th century of comparative philology as a science.²⁷ In studying the languages of gypsies in a particular country or region of Europe, the Middle East or the Indian sub-continent, particular attention has always been paid to the question of the interpenetration of Romany and the local, indigenous tongues (although it was clear to so early an authority as Pott that the language of the gypsies, *Zigeunersprache*, was to be clearly distinguished from that of Sāsānī types, *Gaunersprache*, see his *Die Zigeuner in Europa und Asien*, II, 31). This has certainly been true of the investigation of gypsy languages in the Middle East, and it has been specialists in the indigenous tongues, Turcologists, Arabists, Iranists, etc., who have investigated these linguistic borrowings and cross-currents. Thus in Turkish Anatolia, the Soviet scholar Gordlevsky examined the secret language of the Jarjars of Konya, apparently a subdivision of the Turkish gypsies.²⁸ What little is known about the vocabulary of the secret language of a group of Yürüks (i.e. nomads or semi-nomads) of the province of Burdur in southwestern Anatolia indicates that it is, according to G.L. Lewis, essentially of gypsy origin.²⁹ The White Russian scholar W. Ivanow investigated the language of the Iranian gypsies of Khurasan and adjacent parts of the eastern Islamic world, basing his studies on fieldwork carried out in the period from before the

give a *shāhid* for this), again with the jargon meaning of "vulva" (Ibn ar-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, rhymes *alif-khā'*, with commentary of Muḥammad Sharif Salim [Cairo 1335-40/1917-22], I, 179).

²⁷ Especially significant here were the works of A.F. Pott, *Die Zigeuner in Europa und Asien. Ethnographisch-linguistische Untersuchungen, vornehmlich ihrer Herkunft und Sprache, nach gedruckten und ungedruckten Quelle* (Halle 1844-5), and F. Miklosisch, *Über die Mundarten und Wanderungen der Zigeuner Europa's* (Vienna 1872-81). Pott also concerned himself with Near Eastern gypsy groups, and in his article "Ueber die Sprache der Zigeuner in Syrien", *Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft der Sprache*, I (1846), 175-86, he utilised linguistic material collected in Syria by the American missionary Eli Smith.

²⁸ "Dzhardzhari v Koni", *Doklady Akademii Nauk SSSR* (1927), No. 5, 113 ff.

²⁹ Lewis, "The secret language of the Geygelli Yürüks", *60. Doğum yılı münasebetiyle Zeki Velidi Togan'a armağan* (Istanbul 1950-5), 214-26.

First World War till the years immediately after it.³⁰ At the other side of the Islamic world, the Semitist Enno Littmann wrote a valuable monograph on the Arabic elements in the language of the gypsies of Egypt (*Ghajar, Ghagar*), see on this below, pp. 176 ff.

Specific mention of the gypsies in works relating to the mediaeval Banū Sāsān and their jargons are remarkably few. Although the publicists of and apologists for the Banū Sāsān, from Abū Dulaf to Ibn Dāniyāl's Gharīb, proudly proclaim the profession's alleged royal descent, these groups of rogues and tricksters cannot have been regarded as anything but social pests and pariahs; yet they seem to have remained entirely separate in mediaeval times from the other great outcaste group of the gypsies proper. How much interpenetration there was between the two groups is impossible to estimate, in view of the paucity of sources and the shifting and uncertain nature of the nomenclature of linguistic and ethnic groups in the mediaeval Islamic world. Jāḥiẓ's Khālīd b. Yazīd says that one may apply for information on his past exploits as a beggar to such bodies as the Zuṭṭ of the Lower Iraq marshlands and the Qiqāniyya or Qayāqina pirates of the Persian Gulf shores, both of which bodies seem to have originated from Sind in the first century of Islam.³¹ Similarly, Abū Dulaf boasts, *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, v. 129, that the Zuṭṭ and the Zanj are members of the Banū Sāsān. The Zuṭṭ have been traditionally identified, since the time of de Goeje nearly a century ago, with the Jhāts of the lower Indus valley, non-gypsy Indians brought westwards by the first Caliphs; but according to de Goeje, the name Zuṭṭ came to be applied to all Indians and then, because of their Indian origins, to the gypsies.³² Even terms like *Zanj* and *Barbar*, properly applicable to black Africans brought into the Islamic world as slaves, became used for the gypsies.³³

³⁰ "On the language of the gypsies of Qainat (in Eastern Persia)", *JASB*, N.S. X (1914), 439-55; "Further notes on gypsies in Persia", *ibid.*, XVI (1920), 281-91; "An old Gypsy-Darwish jargon", *ibid.*, XVIII (1922), 375-83; "Some Persian darwish songs", *ibid.*, XXIII (1927), 237-42; "Jargon of Persian mendicant darwishes", *ibid.*, XXIII (1927), 243-5.

³¹ *Kitāb al-Bukhalā'*, 49-50, tr. 70, cf. M.J. de Goeje, *Mémoire sur les migrations des Tsiganes à travers l'Asie*, Mémoires d'Histoire et de Géographie Orientales, No. 3 (Leiden 1903), 12-13.

³² See *ibid.*; de Goeje's views were, however, first ventilated as far back as 1875, see his Preface, v. For more recent work, see G. Ferrand, *ET*¹ "Zuṭṭ", and Pellat, *Le milieu baṣrien et la formation de Ġāḥiẓ*, 37-40, who is less dogmatic about the connections of the Zuṭṭ and the gypsies.

³³ Littmann, *Zigeuner-arabisch* (for which see below, pp. 176-7), 36-7.

Abū Dulaf, v. 127, refers to the Kābulis amongst the jugglers and conjurors of the Banū Sāsān, and the term *Kaoli* (< Kāwulī ~ Kābulī) is used in modern times amongst the Persians as a designation of the gypsies.³⁴

The possibility of specific information on the interpenetration of gypsies and Sāsāni-type groups increases as one approaches modern times. The work of various Soviet Russian scholars on surviving Sāsāni-type jargons in Central Asia, in particular, in what is now Soviet Uzbekistan (see on this further, below), and of Ivanow for eastern Iran (see above, n. 30), is especially significant here. Ivanow mentions, concerning the connection of the gypsies with the Jhāts, that one word used for "gypsy" in Qā'ināt (the mediaeval Qūhistān, on the borders of modern Persia and Afghanistan) was *Bahlūlī*, properly the name of of a Baluchi tribe living in the province of Birjand;³⁵ and he says that "There are many words in the Gypsy language which are used in the secret code of dervishes, beggars, and, I believe, thieves".³⁶

Ivanow mentions seeing and handling at Qarshi near Bukhara a fragment of a *Kitāb-i Sāsiyān ba-kamāl* "Book of the most consummate beggars", written on the margins of three pages of a *majmū'a* devoted to other topics, apparently dating from the 16th century. The fragments were frayed at the edges and difficult to read, but what could be deciphered of the vocabulary showed strong Šūfī and Shī'ī connections.³⁷ Fortunately, more is known about this *Kitāb-i Sāsiyān* through the survival of a better-preserved manuscript in Tashkent (now in the possession of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek S.S.R.). This is written on the margins of five folios of a manuscript dating back to the 8th/14th century, i.e. to the time of Ibn Dāniyāl and Šafī d-Dīn. These folios contain firstly, the vocabulary of the jargon of the Sāsānis, divided into nine subsections, and with the equivalents of these words given in Persian; and secondly, the language of a religious group called the 'Alī-Ilāhīs.³⁸ The headings of the nine subsections deal

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 35. The identification of the gypsies with places through which they have passed or where they have settled, is frequent, cf. the terms "Ḥalabis" in Egypt and "Multānīs" in Kabul for the gypsies, *ibid.*, 3-5, 35.

³⁵ But cf. Abū Dulaf, *Qasīda sāsāniyya*, vv. 9, 120.

³⁶ "On the language of the gypsies of Qainat (in Eastern Persia)", 442, 445.

³⁷ "An old Gypsy-Darwish jargon", 375-8.

³⁸ Whether this group had any connection with the secret religion of the Ahl-i Ḥaqq, centred on western Persia but with branches as far east as Khurasan (see Minorsky, *ET*², s.v., and Cl. Huart, *ET*¹ art. "'Alī Ilāhī"), is unclear; the term 'Alī-Ilāhī gained a very wide reference and was applied to several other religious groups.

respectively with (1) saints' names (2) parts of the body (3) various words concerned with kinship, social class, objects, adjectives, etc. (4) animals' names (5) names of various kinds of grain and seeds (6) names of various kinds of happiness and pleasure (7) names of towns and places (8) verbs, and (9) numerals.

The contents of this vocabulary have been thoroughly investigated by the Soviet scholar A.L. Troitskaya in her article "Abdoltili. Argo tsekha artistov i muzikantov Srednei Azii", *Sovietskoe Vostokovedenie* V (1948), 251-74. In her study she has compared the lexical material of the *Kitāb-i Sāsiyān* with that of the vocabularies of similar groups in Central Asia and eastern Iran which survive today, and has arrived at the conclusion that there is a demonstrable relationship between the language of these 14th century Sāsānis and the modern argots of Soviet Central Asia, eastern Persia and eastern (i.e. what is now Chinese) Turkestan. Moreover, a few of the terms in the *Kitāb-i Sāsiyān* can be found also in Abū Dulaf's *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya* (see below, p. 175).

The whole of this eastern Islamic region, now fragmented politically between Iran, Afghanistan, the Soviet Union and China, was in mediaeval times a culturally unified area with a rich intellectual life and an urban civilisation which had somehow revived after the cataclysms of the 7th/13th century Mongol invasions. Arabic and Persian were accorded the highest prestige as literary media, but Eastern Turkish was gradually acquiring a cultural significance of its own. It was noted in an earlier chapter (see above, pp. 19, 27) that since the time of Jāḥiẓ and Abū Dulaf, the eastern Islamic world seems to have been an area in which the Banū Sāsān especially flourished and from which they and kindred groups of brigands and criminals recruited many of their most vigorous elements. The whole region, much of it broken in configuration, has remained down to the 20th century a refuge area, both for survivors of earlier peoples and for survivals of older languages; one thinks of the survival of Arabic in Uzbekistan, of Mongol in the Ghōrāt of central Afghanistan, of Middle Iranian remnants like Yidgha, Yaghnobi, Wakhi and Mundja on the headwaters of the Oxus, of the Dardic and Kafir languages in the Hindu Kush, of the mysterious Burushaski in Hunza and Gilgit. It is not therefore surprising that the region has also remained a rich one for the survival of secret languages and jargons, some of which are mentioned by Troitskaya in her article. Some of these secret languages work on the familiar children's principle of the re-arrangement of syllables or the intercalation of a meaningless letter or syllable. Of this type is the "Zargari"

language, based on the affixing of the sound of *z* or the syllable *za* to each syllable of a word, noted in Russian and Chinese Turkestan in the later 19th century and in Iran in the early 20th century.³⁹

The languages of the groups which Troitskaya adduces for comparative purposes are, however, argots verging on secret languages, and depend for their distinctiveness and their unintelligibility to outsiders on the inclusion of a large number of words unknown to the surrounding, indigenous populations. The principal argot here in the so-called Abdilti (Turkish, "speech of the *abdāl*", with rounding of the *ā* vowel, characteristic of the Iranian Tajik language, which was much more widespread in western Turkestan, the mediaeval Transoxania, than today⁴⁰), the argot of the gilds of comedians (*kizikchīs*⁴¹), artists and musicians, generally called *mehterlik* or *takiya-sūzanda*, from whom Troitskaya collected material in Tashkent and in the Ferghana valley. As the component *abdāl* in the name would imply,⁴² the Abdilti was in the past also widespread amongst the *meddāhs* or popular religious storytellers (the later equivalents in the Turkish world of the early Arabic *quṣṣāṣ*) and the mendicant dervishes (*qalandars*), groups which in the years up to and just after the Soviet Revolution in Central Asia worked closely together with the musicians' and artists' gilds. Within the Abdilti argot, one notes a strict distinction between the member of the gild, the *kastak* (apparently Persian *kas* "person" + the suffix *-tak*), and the outsider or stranger, the member of the general public, the *degħo* (possibly from Persian *daghā* "deceit, swindle; impostor, swindler"); this corresponds to the emphasis in the *Qaşıda sāsāniyyas* of Abū Dulaf and Şafī d-Dīn on the distinction between the Sāsānī and the *khushnī*, pl. *akhshān*, the non-beggar. Amongst the 200 or so words gathered by Troitskaya are a

³⁹ N. Pantusov, "Yazık ofeney v musulmanskoj sred Turkestana", *Zapiski* of the West Siberian branch of the Russian Geographical Society, X (Omsk 1888), 20-4; D.C. Phillott, "A note of sign, gesture, code and secret language, etc. amongst the Persians", *JASB*, N.S. III (1907), 619-22.

⁴⁰ See on this sound change, G. Lazard, "Caractères distinctifs de la langue tadjik", *BSL*, LI (1956), 126-7.

⁴¹ Cf. W. Radloff, *Versuch eines Wörterbuches der Türk-Dialecte* (St. Petersburg 1983-1911), II/1, 824: *kizikçi* (Kazan dialect), "pleasant, amusing, interesting".

⁴² In Arabic Şūfī terminology, *badal*, pl. *abdāl*, denotes a degree in the hierarchy of saints, those persons who by their secret influence and holiness keep the universe running along proper lines. In the Turkish world, however, *abdāl* (often used as a singular) became a general term for "dervish", as in this eastern Islamic context. See *EI*² art. "Abdāl" (I. Goldziher and H.J. Kissling).

large percentage of Arabic and Persian ones, a few Hebrew, Syriac and Hindi ones (from the local communities of Jews, Christians and Indian traders which existed in the eastern Islamic world during mediaeval times?), and a small percentage of Turkish ones. This last fact is what one would expect in the turcophone region in which the Abdoltili is current; since the basic aims in the construction and evolution of the argot are concealment and mystification, the Turkish element is naturally small.⁴³ Troitskaya further adduces the language of the Central Asian gypsies (Luli), called *arabcha* or *lafz-i mughat*, but in fact based on the Iranian Tajik mother-tongue of these gypsy groups, and she establishes the fact that there are a considerable number of words identical in this and in Abdoltili (see her Table I, pp. 256-7, listing some 50 words common to the two argots).

By comparing the items in the vocabularies of these two argots, and of others from Central Asia and eastern Persia, with the words in the *Kitāb-i Sāsiyān*, Troitskaya shows that there are a considerable number of common words having practically the same meanings (see her Table IV, pp. 264-7). She accordingly asserts that this tabular correlation of words seems to her conclusive in demonstrating a relationship between the argot of the 14th century Central Asian and Khurasanian Sāsānīs and the modern jargons, Abdoltili and Arabcha in Central Asia, those of the dervishes and gypsies of eastern Persia, and that of the Abdāls of eastern Turkestan described by Pelliot, Le Coq and Grenard.⁴⁴ We know of the existence in Chaghatayid and Timūrid eastern Iran and Central Asia of Sāsānī types, defined by Troitskaya as "various wandering actors, dervishes, thieves, vagabonds and similar déclassé elements" from the *Kitāb-i Sāsiyān* itself, which gives in its seventh subsection jargon names for such cities of the eastern Islamic world as Samarqand, Bukhara, Merv, Balkh, Herat, Nishāpūr, Gurgān and Ray.⁴⁵ But there is also the evidence of the great Chaghatai writer Mīr 'Alī-Shīr Nevā'ī (844-906/1441-1501), who in the first part of his moralistic and aphoristic work, the *Maḥbūb al-qulūb*, gives sketches of various social classes and professions,

⁴³ Troitskaya notes in regard to her Appendix 2, Abdoltili Glossary, that this includes a number of very common Persian Tajik words, such as *padar* "father", *dahan* "mouth", *ushtur* "camel", which are used here as secret words and are incomprehensible to the Uzbeks; she believes that they have only recently been absorbed into Abdoltili ("Abdoltili", 269 n. 1).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 263.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 260.

including characterisations of beggars, musicians, *meddāhs*, etc. and mentions organised brotherhoods of beggars in the Timūrid capital of Herat.⁴⁶

Especially interesting for us, however, is the fact that a few words in the vocabulary of the *Kitāb-i Sāsiyān* are identical in form with some in Abū Dulaf's *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya* of four centuries before, even though the highly-specialised meanings given in Abū Dulaf's commentary have in some cases been attenuated or generalised by the passage of time. Thus in the *Kitāb-i Sāsiyān* we have *h.ra*, glossed in Persian as *kūn* "anus, rump", cf. Abū Dulaf, v. 25, *hirr*, glossed as *dubur* "anus, rump"; *m.y.s.r.* glossed as *ghāzī*, "fighter for the faith", cf. Abū Dulaf, v. 37, *maisara*, glossed as "to beg on the pretext that he comes from the frontier regions of the Islamic world", with the noun of person *maisarānī*⁴⁷; *hādūr*, glossed as *kār* "business, activity", cf. Abū Dulaf, v. 57, *hādhūr*, glossed as "the word for the circle around which people congregate"; *t.n.b.l.* glossed as "lazy person, simpleton", cf. Abū Dulaf, v. 58, *t.n.b.l.* glossed as "stupid person, dupe of the Sāsānī tricksters"; and *burkūsh*, glossed as *kar* "deaf", cf. Abū Dulaf, v. 75, *barkūsh/burkūsh*, glossed as "the beggar who feigns deafness".⁴⁸ And finally here, one may note the correspondence between the *mash-āmīl* (sing. *mashmūl*) "loaves of bread" of Abū Dulaf, v. 154, the *sh.mūl* "bread" of Ṣafī d-Dīn, vv. 21, 57, various derivatives from the Arabic verb *shamala*, originally "to embrace, comprehend" > "to eat", denoting amongst other meanings "bread" in modern gypsy Arabic jargons,⁴⁹ and the *shamul*, *shambul* of Abdoltili and the *shamul* of Arabcha, both meaning "pilau", and the *shumul*, *shamul* "grain meant for bread" of the eastern Turkestan Abdāls.⁵⁰

Troitskaya was unaware of the existence of Ṣafī d-Dīn's *Qaṣīda sāsāniyya*, which stems from the same century as the *Kitāb-i Sāsiyān*

⁴⁶ On the *Maḥbūb al-qulūb*, see A.V.Z. Togan, *Islām Ansiklopedisi*, art. "Ali Şir", and A. Bombaci, *Storia della letteratura turca dall' antico impero di Mongolia all' odierna Turchia* (Milan 1956), 149-50; it has been printed at Istanbul, Bukhara and Tashkent, and properly edited by A.N. Kononov (Moscow-Leningrad 1948).

⁴⁷ It seems more likely that the Abdoltili words *maisagar* "musician" and *maisagarlik* "game" come from the ancient Arabian game of *maisir*, denounced and prohibited in Qur'ān, ii. 216/219, v. 92-3/90-1, especially as the word is extended in post-Qur'ānic times to denote any form of gambling or game of chance.

⁴⁸ "Abdoltili", Table III, p. 262.

⁴⁹ Cf. Littmann, *Zigeuner-arabisch*, 6, 15, 17.

⁵⁰ "Abdoltili", 267.

but from a different geographical and cultural region, sc. that of Iraq, Diyārbakr and Syria. Unfortunately for our purposes, she does not give the complete jargon vocabulary of the *Kitāb-i Sāsiyān*, but only such items as those adduced for comparative purposes, e.g. for comparisons with Abū Dulaf's poem and with the modern argots like the Abdoltili. Hence it is not possible to state categorically whether there are any words common to the *Kitāb-i Sāsiyān* and Ṣafī d-Dīn's poem beyond that one term *shumūl/mashmūl* which appears in the poems of both Abū Dulaf and Ṣafī d-Dīn and which probably remained current amongst the Sāsānis of the eastern Iranian lands and then passed directly into the Central Asian argots. One notes in the vocabulary of the *Kitāb-i Sāsiyān*, as revealed in Troitskaya's examples, a certain fondness for employing in this argot Arabic nouns with the suffix *-ā* (e.g. *qamrā* "moon", *kalbā* "dog", *ghanamā* "sheep", *yadā* "hand"). Present in the modern Abdoltili vocabulary is the word *goz* "money collected by members of the gild from their audience", which Troitskaya connects with Persian *gāz* "act of seizing, snatching away"⁵¹ and which may conceivably be the same as the *kāz* of Ṣafī d-Dīn, v. 56, glossed as "the beggar who pushes his way into the circle of onlookers, in order that they might collect money for him, whilst he is in fact one of them (sc. of the beggars)". However, the word may be purely Arabic in origin, since we already find the verb *kawwaza* "to collect, gather together money", yielding the noun of agent *mukawwiz* in Abū Dulaf, v. 32, glossed as "the person who stands up in the circles of the storytellers [and collects money there] ...". Nevertheless, until the entire text of the *Kitāb-i Sāsiyān* is available for critical examination, the questions of whether there is any organic connection between its vocabulary and that of Ṣafī d-Dīn's poem, or whether the jargons of the central Islamic lands and the eastern ones developed quite separately, must remain unanswered.

Amongst the jargons of the Arab Near East, the Syro-Palestinian and Egyptian regions, it was that of the gypsies, and groups which were thought at that time to be connected with the gypsies, which early attracted the attention of 19th century travellers and residents in the area, from the German explorer Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767-1811) onwards. Hence a fair amount of linguistic material from these groups was available in scattered publications, and these formed the basis of Littmann's detailed study, *Zigeuner-arabisch, Wortschatz*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 270.

und Grammatik der arabischen Bestandteile in den morgenländischen Zigeunersprachen, nebst einer Einleitung über das arabische Rotwälsch und die Namen der morgenländischen Zigeuner (Bonn-Leipzig 1920). Littmann's primary concern was naturally with the Ghajar/Ghagar and Nawar (sing. *Nūrī*) of Egypt and Syria, and the core of his book is a vocabulary of the Arabic loanwords in the language of Near Eastern gypsy groups. He nevertheless had to consider the question of the links between these groups and the non-gypsy vagabonds and beggars of the region. In particular, he examined the position of the Ḥalabīs of Egypt, a group whom the Swiss orientalist and traveller John Lewis Burckhardt described in the early 19th century as a group parallel to, but distinct from, the Ghawāzī or Barāmika (see above, pp. 22-3) and as being made up of tinkers and horse and ass doctors (the males) and common prostitutes (the females).⁵² Littmann's conclusion here was that, *pace* earlier authorities, the Ḥalabī dialect was definitely not a true gypsy one.⁵³

We are not concerned here with the problems of the migrations of the gypsies and of linguistic intermingling. The main interest of Littmann's work for us here lies in two points, firstly that he gives some sapient remarks on the methodology of research into jargons and secret languages, and secondly that he devotes considerable space to an examination of what he calls "arabische Rotwälsch". In regard to the first point, he gives at the outset a caveat that everyone dealing with middle Eastern jargons and secret languages would assent to:

Von vorn herein sei bemerkt, dass wir uns hier auf einem ausserordentlich unsicheren Boden befinden. Die Wörter in den Gauner- und Kundensprachen sind ja absichtlich und willkürlich unkenntlich gemacht, formell, oder unter Beibehaltung der Form, inhaltlich. Die formellen Veränderungen sind mancherlei Art ... Dadurch ist die Erklärung sehr vieler Wörter ausserordentlich erschwert; bei manchen wird man nie über eine mehr oder minder wahrscheinliche Deutung hinauskommen, und da wird der Leser meiner Erklärungen sich sagen ebenso wie ich selbst: Es kann aber auch ganz anders sein.

⁵² *Arabic proverbs, or the manners and customs of the modern Egyptians, illustrated from their proverbial sayings current at Cairo* (London 1830), 178-9. It is interesting to note that Burckhardt states in connection with the Ghawāzī, singing girls and prostitutes, that they had a secret language of their own: "The Ghawāzys have established among themselves a vocabulary of the most common nouns and phrases, in which they are able to converse without being understood by those who visit them" (*ibid.*, 178).

⁵³ *Zigeuner-arabisch*, 4-5.

He then goes on to detail the specific problems involved in the evaluation of this linguistic material: the internal re-arrangement of letters and syllables, the addition or subtraction of vocables from the words themselves; the unfavourable conditions under which such material has often been collected; the unscientific rendering of the words into print; etc.⁵⁴ One might add to these the intrinsic difficulty of an outsider, above all a western European investigator, ever penetrating to the real heart of jargon and secret language usage.

Concerning the second point, Littmann's discussion of "arabische Rotwälsch" (pp. 6-28) consists basically of a critical sifting of the Ḥalabī dialect material given by A. von Kremer in his *Aegypten. Forschungen über Land und Volk während eines Zehnjährigen Aufenthalts* (Leipzig 1863), I, 138-48, and by Captain Newbold in his article "The gypsies of Egypt", *JRAS*, XVI (1856), 285-312. Littmann adduces here several parallels from the *Qasīda sāsāniyya* of Abū Dulaf (though like Troitskaya, he was apparently unaware of Ṣafī d-Dīn's poem), and a considerable number of the words listed by him are illuminated by reference to Abū Dulaf's poem. E.g. Littmann's No. 2 (cf. also Nos. 63, 86), Newbold's *shemūn*, *meshmūl* "bread", cf. Abū Dulaf, v. 154 commentary, *mashmūl* (and also Ṣafī d-Dīn, vv. 21, 57, *shumūl*); No. 4, Von Kremer's *kodde*, Newbold's *kūdah* "mother, wife, woman in general", cf. Abū Dulaf, v. 141, *kudda* (and also Ṣafī d-Dīn, vv. 45, 57); No. 6, Von Kremer's *sem'ah* (with presumably *qāf* pronounced as a glottal stop) "sister", Newbold's *sumgun* "boy", *sumgunih* "sister", cf. Abū Dulaf, v. 86, *s.mqūn* (and also Ṣafī d-Dīn, v. 11, *samāqīn*); No. 41, Von Kremer's *huzzārah*, Newbold's *hazāra* "eye" (*ḥazzāra* < ? *nazzāra*, but cf. Abū Dulaf, v. 75, commentary, *al-jazzāra*); and Newbold's *gunwāni* "to rob", cf. Abū Dulaf, v. 59, *qanwana*. Littmann missed the significance of Newbold's *hushno* "a gentile (or one not a gypsy)", obviously to be connected with the *khushnī* "non-beggar" of Abū Dulaf, vv. 69, 169, and Ṣafī d-Dīn, *passim*.⁵⁵

In an article which appeared a few years after Littmann's book, P. Kahle brought forward some reinterpretations of words discussed by Littmann, together with fresh material collected by himself from Egyptian (non-gypsy) informants in Germany and from personal research on the spot in Cairo in 1914, one of his sources here being

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 6-8, 13, 22-3.

a shadow-play artist.⁵⁶ After our remarking the persistence of words from the poems of Abū Dulaf and Ṣafī d-Dīn over so many succeeding centuries, it is not surprising that amongst Kahle's material we come across *kabān* "dung, excrement", used e.g. in the phrase *abezbiz kabān* "I defecate", cf. Abū Dulaf, v. 133, *kabbana*; *bishbāsha* "beard", cf. Abū Dulaf, v. 69, Ṣafī d-Dīn, v. 61, *bashbāsha*; *sarmat/sarmat/ṣarmat/ṣarmat* "he wrote", *surmāta* "book", *surmātī* "magician, sand diviner, writer of amulets", cf. Abū Dulaf, v. 76, Ṣafī d-Dīn, vv. 35, 39, 42; *ṭani* "death", cf. Ṣafī d-Dīn, vv. 28, 30, 60, 63, *ṭanā* "he died", etc.; *mataḥ* "he went forth", *mattaḥna* "he drove us away", cf. Ṣafī d-Dīn, v. 12, *tamtīh* "travelling about"; *kōsh* "black slave", cf. Ṣafī d-Dīn, v. 55; *kamashtar* "camel", cf. Ṣafī d-Dīn, v. 24, *k.b.sht.r*; etc.⁵⁷

Finally, Littmann has some general comments on the morphology and phonetic changes which we can discern in his collection of "arabische Rotwälsch" material. *Inter alia*, he observes that the *mif'āl* noun form is very notable in Ḥalabī, at the side of which one might cite Abū Dulaf, vv. 47 *miṭrāsh*, 114 *mishqā'*, Ṣafī d-Dīn, vv. 20 *miqlā'*, 25 *mishwādh*. Also, the nominal suffix *-ān*, found both in Persian and the Semitic languages, is common in Ḥalabī, cf. Abū Dulaf, vv. 23 *maiza-qānī*, 45 *maṣṭabānī*, Ṣafī d-Dīn, vv. 1, 2, 23, 42 *mishtān*, 13 *ṣūfān*, 27 *rakhtānī*, 44 *ṭarshān*, 65 *q.ntānī*.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ "Ein Zunftsprache der ägyptischen Schattenspieler", *Islamica*, II (1926-7), 313-22.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 316, 318-20.

⁵⁸ *Zigeuner-arabisch*, 24-5.

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